SPEECH

OF

EDMUND BURKE, Esq.

&c. &c. &c.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

E. Burke (Right Hon.) James Martin 4-

SPEECH

OF

EDMUND BURKE, Esq.

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR THE CITY OF BRISTOL,

On preſenting to the Houſe of Commons

(On the 11th of February, 1780)

A PLAN FOR THE BETTER SECURITY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF PARLIAMENT,

AND THE

OECONOMICAL REFORMATION OF THE CIVIL AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS.

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SPEECH, &c.

Mr. SPEAKER,

I Riſe, in acquittal of my engagement to the houſe, in obedience to the ſtrong and juſt requiſition of my conſtituents, and, I am perſuaded, in conformity to the unanimous wiſhes of the whole nation, to ſubmit to the wiſdom of parliament, "A plan of reform in the conſtitution of ſeveral parts of the public œconomy."

I have endeavoured, that this plan ſhould include in its execution, a conſiderable reduction of improper expence; that, it ſhould effect a converſion of unprofitable titles into a productive eſtate; that, it ſhould lead to, and indeed almoſt compel, a provident adminiſtration of ſuch ſums of public money as muſt remain under diſcretionary truſts; that, it ſhould render the incurring debts on the civil eſtabliſhment (which muſt ultimately affect national ſtrength and national credit) ſo very difficult, as to become next to impracticable.

But what, I confeſs, was uppermoſt with me, what I bent the whole force of my mind to, was

the reduction of that corrupt influence, which is itſelf the perennial ſpring of all prodigality, and of all diſorder; which loads us, more than millions of debt; which takes away vigour from our arms, wiſdom from our councils, and every ſhadow of authority and credit from the moſt venerable parts of our conſtitution.

Sir, I aſſure you, very ſolemnly, and with a very clear conſcience, that nothing in the world has led me to ſuch an undertaking, but my zeal for the honour of this houſe, and the ſettled, habitual, ſyſtematic affection I bear to the cauſe, and to the principles of government.

I enter perfectly into the nature and conſequences of my attempt; and I advance to it with a tremor that ſhakes me to the inmoſt fibre of my frame. I feel, that I engage in a buſineſs, in itſelf moſt ungracious; totally wide of the courſe of prudent conduct; and I really think, the moſt compleatly adverſe that can be imagined, to the natural turn and temper of my own mind. I know, that all parſimony is of a quality approaching to unkindneſs; and that (on ſome perſon or other) every reform muſt operate as a ſort of puniſhment. Indeed the whole claſs of the ſevere and reſtrictive virtues, are at a market almoſt too high for humanity. What is worſe, there are very few of thoſe virtues which are not capable of being imitated, and even outdone in many of their moſt ſtriking effects, by the worſt of vices. Malignity and envy will carve much more deeply, and finiſh much more ſharply, in the work of retrenchment, than frugality amd providence. I do not, therefore, wonder that gentlemen have kept away from ſuch a taſk, as well from good nature as from prudence. Private feeling might, indeed, be overborne by legiſlative reaſon; and a man of a long-ſighted and ſtrong-nerved humanity,

humanity, might bring himſelf, not ſo much to conſider from whom he takes a ſuperfluous enjoyment, as for whom in the end he may preſerve the abſolute neceſſaries of life.

But it is much more eaſy to reconcile this meaſure to humanity, than to bring it to any agreement with prudence. I do not mean that little, ſelfiſh, pitiful, baſtard thing, which ſometimes goes by the name of a family in which it is not legitimate, and to which it is a diſgrace;—I mean even that public and enlarged prudence, which, apprehenſive of being diſabled from rendering acceptable ſervices to the world, withholds itſelf from thoſe that are invidious. Gentlemen who are, with me, verging towards the decline of life, and are apt to form their ideas of kings from kings of former times, might dread the anger of a reigning prince;—they who are more provident of the future, or by being young are more intereſted in it, might tremble at the reſentment of the ſucceſſor: they might ſee a long, dull, dreary, unvaried viſto of deſpair and excluſion, for half a century, before them. This is no pleaſant proſpect at the outſet of a political journey.

Beſides Sir, the private enemies to be made in all attempts of this kind, are innumerable; and their enmity will be the more bitter, and the more dangerous too, becauſe a ſenſe of dignity will oblige them to conceal the cauſe of their reſentment. Very few men of great families and extenſive connections, but will feel the ſmart of a cutting reform, in ſome cloſe relation, ſome boſom friend, ſome pleaſant acquaintance, ſome dear protected dependant. Emolument is taken from ſome; patronage from others; objects of purſuit from all. Men, forced into an involuntary independence, will abhor the authors of a bleſſing which in their eyes has ſo very near a reſemblance to a curſe. When officers are removed,

and the offices remain, you may ſet the gratitude of ſome againſt the anger of others; you may oppoſe the friends you oblige againſt the enemies you provoke. But ſervices of the preſent ſort create no attachments. The individual good felt in a public benefit, is comparatively ſo ſmall, and comes round through ſuch an involved labyrinth of intricate and tedious revolutions; whilſt a preſent perſonal detriment is ſo heavy where it falls, and ſo inſtant in its operation, that the cold commendation of a public advantage never was, and never will be, a match for the quick ſenſibility of a private loſs: and you may depend upon it, Sir, that when many people have an intereſt in railing, ſooner or later, they will bring a conſiderable degree of unpopularity upon any meaſure. So that, for the preſent at leaſt, the reformation will operate againſt the reformers; and revenge (as againſt them) will produce all the effects of corruption.

This, Sir, is almoſt always the caſe, where the plan has compleat ſucceſs. But how ſtands the matter in the mere attempt? Nothing, you know, is more common, than for men to wiſh, and call loudly too, for a reformation, who, when it arrives, do by no means like the ſeverity of its aſpect. Reformation is one of thoſe pieces which muſt be put at ſome diſtance in order to pleaſe. Its greateſt favourers love it better in the abſtract than in the ſubſtance. When any old prejudice of their own, or any intereſt that they value, is touched, they become ſcrupulous, they become captious, and every man has his ſeparate exception. Some pluck out the black hairs, ſome the grey; one point muſt be given up to one; another point muſt be yielded to another; nothing is ſuffered to prevail upon its own principle: the whole is ſo frittered down, and disjointed, that

ſcarcely

ſcarcely a trace of the original ſcheme remains! Thus, between the reſiſtance of power, and the unſyſtematical proceſs of popularity, the undertaker and the undertaking are both expoſed, and the poor reformer is hiſſed off the ſtage, both by friends and foes.

Obſerve, Sir, that the apology for my undertaking (an apology which, though long, is no longer than neceſſary) is not grounded on my want of the fulleſt ſenſe of the difficult and invidious nature of the taſk I undertake. I riſque odium if I ſucceed, and contempt if I fail. My excuſe muſt reſt in mine and your conviction of the abſolute, urgent *neceſſity* there is, that ſomething of the kind ſhould be done. If there is any ſacrifice to be made, either of eſtimation or of fortune, the ſmalleſt is the beſt. Commanders in chief are not to be put upon the forlorn hope. But indeed it is neceſſary that the attempt ſhould be made. It is neceſſary from our own political circumſtances; it is neceſſary from the operations of the enemy; it is neceſſary from the demands of the people; whoſe deſires, when they do not militate with the ſtable and eternal rules of juſtice and reaſon (rules which are above us, and above them) ought to be as a law to a Houſe of Commons.

As to our circumſtances; I do not mean to aggravate the difficulties of them, by the ſtrength of any colouring whatſoever. On the contrary, I obſerve, and obſerve with pleaſure, that our affairs rather wear a more promiſing aſpect than they did on the opening of this ſeſſion. We have had ſome leading ſucceſſes. But thoſe who rate them at the higheſt (higher a great deal than I dare to do) are of opinion, that, upon the ground of ſuch advantages, we cannot at this time hope to make any treaty of peace, which

would not be ruinous and completely diſgraceful. In ſuch an anxious ſtate of things, if dawnings of ſucceſs ſerve to animate our diligence, they are good; if they tend to increaſe our preſumption, they are worſe than defeats. The ſtate of our affairs ſhall then be as promiſing as any one may chooſe to conceive it: It is however but promiſing. We muſt recollect, that with but half of our natural ſtrength, we are at war againſt confederated powers who have ſingly threatned us with ruin: We muſt recollect, that whilſt we are left naked on one ſide, our other flank is uncovered by any alliance; That whilſt we are weighing and balancing our ſucceſſes againſt our loſſes, we are accumulating debt to the amount of at leaſt fourteen millions in the year. That loſs is certain.

I have no wiſh to deny, that our ſucceſſes are as brilliant as any one chooſes to make them; our reſources too may, for me, be as unfathomable as they are repreſented. Indeed they are juſt whatever the people poſſeſs, and will ſubmit to pay. Taxing is an eaſy buſineſs. Any projector can contrive new impoſitions; any bungler can add to the old. But is it altogether wiſe to have no other bounds to your impoſitions, than the patience of thoſe who are to bear them?

All I claim upon the ſubject of your reſources is this, that they are not likely to be *increaſed* by waſting them.—I think I ſhall be permitted to aſſume, that a ſyſtem of frugality will not *leſſen* your riches, whatever they may be;—I believe it will not be hotly diſputed, that thoſe reſources which lie heavy on the ſubject, ought not to be objects of *preference*; that they ought not to be the *very firſt choice*, to an honeſt repreſentative of the people.

This is all, Sir, that I ſhall ſay upon our circumſtances and our reſources. I mean to ſay a little

little more on the operations of the enemy, becauſe this matter ſeems to me very natural in our preſent deliberation. When I look to the other ſide of the water, I cannot help recollecting what Pyrrhus ſaid on reconnoitering the Roman camp, "Theſe Barbarians have nothing barbarous in "their diſcipline." When I look, as I have pretty carefully looked, into the proceedings of the French king, I am ſorry to ſay it, I ſee nothing of the character and genius of arbitrary finance; none of the bold frauds of bankrupt power; none of the wild ſtruggles, and plunges, of deſpotiſm in diſtreſs;—no lopping off from the capital of debt;—no ſuſpenſion of intereſt;—no robbery under the name of loan;—no raiſing the value, no debaſing the ſubſtance of the coin. I ſee neither Louis the fourteenth, nor Louis the fifteenth. On the contrary, I behold with aſtoniſhment, riſing before me, by the very hands of arbitrary power, and in the very midſt of war and confuſion, a regular, methodical ſyſtem of public credit; I behold a fabric laid on the natural and ſolid foundations of truſt and confidence among men; and riſing, by fair gradations, order over order, according to the juſt rules of ſymmetry and art. What a reverſe of things! Principle, method, regularity, œconomy, frugality, juſtice to individuals, and care of the people, are the reſources with which France makes war upon Great Britain. God avert the omen! But if we ſhould ſee any genius in war and politics ariſe in France, to ſecond what is done in the bureau! —I turn my eyes from the conſequences.

The noble Lord in the blue ribbon, laſt year, treated all this with contempt. He never could conceive it poſſible that the French miniſter of finance could go through that year with a loan of but ſeventeen hundred thouſand pounds; and that he ſhould be able to fund that loan without any

tax. The ſecond year, however, opens the very ſame ſcene. A ſmall loan, a loan of no more than two millions five hundred thouſand pounds, is to carry our enemies through the ſervice of this year alſo. No tax is raiſed to fund that debt; no tax is raiſed for the current ſervices. I am credibly informed that there is no anticipation whatſoever. *Compenſations are correctly made. Old debts continue to be ſunk as in the time of profound peace. Even payments which their treaſury had been authorized to ſuſpend during the time of war, are not ſuſpended.

A general reform, executed through every *department of the revenue*, creates an annual income of more than half a million, whilſt it facilitates and ſimplifies all the functions of adminiſtration. The king's *houſehold*—at the remoteſt avenues to which, all reformation has been hitherto ſtopped—that houſehold, which has been the ſtrong hold of prodigality, the virgin fortreſs which was never before attacked—has been not only not defended, but it has, even in the forms, been ſurrendered by the king to the œconomy of his miniſter. No capitulation; no reſerve. Œconomy has entered in triumph into the public ſplendour of the monarch, into his private amuſements, into the appointments of his neareſt and higheſt relations. Œconomy and public ſpirit have made a beneficent and an honeſt ſpoil; they have plundered, from extravagance and luxury, for the uſe of ſubſtantial ſervice, a revenue of near four hundred thouſand pounds. The reform of the finances, joined to this reform of the court, gives to the public nine hundred thouſand pounds a year and upwards.

The miniſter who does theſe things is a great man—But the king who deſires that they ſhould be

* This term comprehends various retributions made to perſons whoſe offices are taken away, or who, in any other way, ſuffer by the new arrangements that are made.

done,

done, is a far greater. We muſt do juſtice to our enemies—Theſe are the acts of a patriot king. I am not in dread of the vaſt armies of France: I am not in dread of the gallant ſpirit of its brave and numerous nobility: I am not alarmed even at the great navy which has been ſo miraculouſly created. All theſe things Louis the fourteenth had before. With all theſe things, the French monarchy has more than once fallen proſtrate at the feet of the public faith of Great Britain. It was the want of public credit which diſabled France from recovering after her defeats, or recovering even from her victories and triumphs. It was a prodigal court, it was an ill-ordered revenue, that ſapped the foundations of all her greatneſs. Credit cannot exiſt under the arm of neceſſity. Neceſſity ſtrikes at credit, I allow, with a heavier and quicker blow under an arbitrary monarchy, than under a limited and balanced government: but ſtill neceſſity and credit are natural enemies, and cannot be long reconciled in any ſituation. From neceſſity and corruption, a free ſtate may loſe the ſpirit of that complex conſtitution which is the foundation of confidence. On the other hand, I am far from being ſure, that a monarchy, when once it is properly regulated, may not for a long time, furniſh a foundation for credit upon the ſolidity of its maxims, though it affords no ground of truſt in its inſtitutions. I am afraid I ſee in England, and in France, ſomething like a beginning of both theſe things. I wiſh I may be found in a miſtake.

This very ſhort, and very imperfect ſtate of what is now going on in France (the laſt circumſtances of which I received in about eight days after the regiſtry of the * edict) I do not, Sir, lay before you for any invidious purpoſe. It is in

* Edict, regiſtered 29 Jan. 1780.

order

order to excite in us the ſpirit of a noble emulation.—Let the nations make war upon each other (ſince we muſt make war) not with a low and vulgar malignity, but by a competition of virtues. This is the only way by which both parties can gain by war. The French have imitated us; let us, through them, imitate ourſelves; ourſelves in our better and happier days. If public frugality, under whatever men, or in whatever mode of government, is national ſtrength, it is a ſtrength which our enemies are in poſſeſſion of before us.

Sir, I am well aware, that the ſtate and the reſult of the French œconomy which I have laid before you, are even now lightly treated by ſome, who ought never to ſpeak but from information. Pains have not been ſpared, to repreſent them as impoſitions on the public. Let me tell you, Sir, that the creation of a navy, and a two years war without taxing, are a very ſingular ſpecies of impoſture. But be it ſo. For what end does Neckar carry on this deluſion? Is it to lower the eſtimation of the crown he ſerves, and to render his own adminiſtration contemptible? No! No! He is conſcious, that the ſenſe of mankind is ſo clear and decided in favour of œconomy, and of the weight and value of its reſources, that he turns himſelf to every ſpecies of fraud and artifice, to obtain the meer reputation of it. Men do not affect a conduct that tends to their diſcredit. Let us, then, get the better of Monſieur Neckar in his own way—Let us do in reality what he does only in pretence—Let us turn his French tinſel into Engliſh gold. Is then the meer opinion and appearance of frugality and good management of ſuch uſe to France, and is the ſubſtance to be ſo miſchievous to England? Is the very conſtitution of nature ſo altered by a ſea of twenty miles, that œconomy ſhould give power

on

on the continent, and that profuſion ſhould give it here? For God's ſake let not this be the only faſhion of France which we refuſe to copy.

To the laſt kind of neceſſity, the deſires of the people, I have but a very few words to ſay. The miniſters ſeem to conteſt this point; and affect to doubt, whether the people do really deſire a plan of œconomy in the civil government. Sir, this is too ridiculous. It is impoſſible that they ſhould not deſire it. It is impoſſible that a prodigality which draws its reſources from their indigence, ſhould be pleaſing to them. Little factions of penſioners, and their dependants, may talk another language. But the voice of nature is againſt them; and it will be heard. The people of England will not, they cannot take it kindly, that repreſentatives ſhould refuſe to their conſtituents, what an abſolute ſovereign voluntarily offers to his ſubjects. The expreſſion of the petitions is, that "*before any new burthens are* "*laid upon this country, effectual meaſures be taken* "*by this houſe, to enquire into, and correct, the* "*groſs abuſes in the expenditure of public money.*"

This has been treated by the noble lord in the blue ribbon, as a wild factious language. It happens, however, that the people in their addreſs to us, uſe almoſt word for word the ſame terms as the king of France uſes in addreſſing himſelf to his people; and it differs only, as it falls ſhort of the French king's idea of what is due to his ſubjects. "To convince," ſays he, "our "faithful ſubjects of *the deſire we entertain not* "*to recur to new impoſitions*, until we have firſt "exhauſted all the reſources which order and "œconomy can poſſibly ſupply"—&c. &c.

Theſe deſires of the people of England, which come far ſhort of the voluntary conceſſions of the king of France, are moderate indeed. They only

only contend that we ſhould interweave ſome œconomy with the taxes with which we have choſen to begin the war. They requeſt, not that you ſhould rely upon œconomy excluſively, but that you ſhould give it rank and precedence, in the order of the ways and means of this ſingle ſeſſion.

But if it were poſſible, that the deſires of our conſtituents, deſires which are at once ſo natural, and ſo very much tempered and ſubdued, ſhould have no weight with an houſe of commons, which has its eye elſewhere; I would turn my eyes to the very quarter to which theirs are directed. I would reaſon this matter with the houſe, on the mere policy of the queſtion; and I would undertake to prove, that an early dereliction of abuſe, is the direct intereſt of government, of government taken abſtractedly from its duties, and conſidered merely as a ſyſtem intending its own conſervation.

If there is any one eminent criterion, which, above all the reſt, diſtinguiſhes a wiſe government from an adminiſtration weak and improvident, it is this;—" well to know the beſt time and manner " of yielding, what it is impoſſible to keep."—There have been, Sir, and there are, many who chuſe to chicane with their ſituation, rather than be inſtructed by it. Thoſe gentlemen argue againſt every deſire of reformation, upon the principles of a criminal proſecution. It is enough for them to juſtify their adherence to a pernicious ſyſtem, that it is not of their contrivance; that it is an inheritance of abſurdity, derived to them from their anceſtors; that they can make out a long and unbroken pedigree of miſmanagers that have gone before them. They are proud of the antiquity of their houſe; and they defend their errors, as if they were defending their inheritance: afraid

afraid of derogating from their nobility; and carefully avoiding a ſort of blot in their ſcutcheon, which they think would degrade them for ever.

It was thus that the unfortunate Charles the Firſt defended himſelf on the practice of the Stuart who went before him, and of all the Tudors; his partizans might have gone to the Plantagenets.—They might have found bad examples enough, both abroad and at home, that could have ſhewn an antient and illuſtrious deſcent. But there is a time, when men will not ſuffer bad things becauſe their anceſtors have ſuffered worſe. There is a time, when the hoary head of inveterate abuſe, will neither draw reverence nor obtain protection. If the noble Lord in the blue ribbon pleads, "*not guilty*," to the charges brought againſt the preſent ſyſtem of public œconomy, it is not poſſible to give a fair verdict by which he will not ſtand acquitted. But pleading is not our preſent buſineſs. His plea or his traverſe may be allowed as an anſwer to a charge, when a charge is made. But if he puts himſelf in the way to obſtruct reformation, then the faults of his office inſtantly become his own. Inſtead of a public officer in an abuſive department, whoſe province is an object to be regulated, he becomes a criminal who is to be puniſhed. I do moſt ſeriouſly put it to adminiſtration, to conſider the wiſdom of a timely reform. Early reformations are amicable arrangements with a friend in power: Late reformations are terms impoſed upon a conquered enemy; early reformations are made in cool blood; late reformations are made under a ſtate of inflammation. In that ſtate of things the people behold in government nothing that is reſpectable. They ſee the abuſe, and they will ſee nothing elſe—They fall into the temper of a furious populace provoked at the diſorder of a houſe

of ill fame; they never attempt to correct or regulate; they go to work by the ſhorteſt way—They abate the nuſance, they pull down the houſe.

This is my opinion with regard to the true intereſt of government. But as it is the intereſt of government that reformation ſhould be early, it is the intereſt of the people that it ſhould be temperate. It is their intereſt, becauſe a temperate reform is permanent; and becauſe it has a principle of growth. Whenever we improve, it is right to leave room for a further improvement. It is right to conſider, to look about us, to examine the effect of what we have done—Then we can proceed with confidence, becauſe we can proceed with intelligence.—Whereas in hot reformations, in what men, more zealous than conſiderate, *call making clear work*, the whole is generally ſo crude, ſo harſh, ſo indigeſted; mixed with ſo much imprudence, and ſo much injuſtice; ſo contrary to the whole courſe of human nature and human inſtitutions, that the very people who are moſt eager for it, are among the firſt to grow diſguſted at what they have done. Then ſome part of the abdicated grievance is recalled from its exile in order to become a corrective of the correction. Then the abuſe aſſumes all the credit and popularity of a reform. The very idea of purity and diſintereſtedneſs in politics falls into diſrepute, and is conſidered as a viſion of hot and inexperienced men; and thus diſorders become incurable, not by the virulence of their own quality, but by the unapt and violent nature of the remedies. A great part therefore, of my idea of reform, is meant to operate gradually; ſome benefits will come at a nearer, ſome at a more remote period. We muſt no more make haſte to be rich by parſimony, than by intemperate acquiſition.

In my opinion, it is our duty when we have

the deſires of the people before us, to purſue them, not in the ſpirit of literal obedience, which may militate with their very principle, much leſs to treat them with a peeviſh and contentious litigation, as if we were adverſe parties in a ſuit. It would, Sir, be moſt diſhonourable for a faithful repreſentative of the commons, to take advantage of any inartificial expreſſion of the people's wiſhes, in order to fruſtrate their attainment of what they have an undoubted right to expect. We are under infinite obligations to our conſtituents, who have raiſed us to ſo diſtinguiſhed a truſt, and have imparted ſuch a degree of ſanctity to common characters. We ought to walk before them with purity, plainneſs, and integrity of heart; with filial love, and not with ſlaviſh fear, which is always a low and tricking thing. For my own part, in what I have meditated upon that ſubject, I cannot indeed take upon me to ſay I have the honour *to follow* the ſenſe of the people. The truth is, *I met it on the way*, while I was purſuing their intereſt according to my own ideas. I am happy beyond expreſſion, to find that my intentions have ſo far coincided with theirs, that I have not had cauſe to be in the leaſt ſcrupulous to ſign their Petition, conceiving it to expreſs my own opinions, as nearly as general terms can expreſs the object of particular arrangements.

I am therefore ſatisfied to act as a fair mediator between government and the people, endeavouring to form a plan which ſhould have both an early and a temperate operation. I mean, that it ſhould be ſubſtantial; that it ſhould be ſyſtematic; that it ſhould rather ſtrike at the firſt cauſe of prodigality and corrupt influence, than attempt to follow them in all their effects.

It was to fulfil the firſt of theſe objects (the propoſal of ſomething ſubſtantial) that I found myſelf

myſelf obliged at the out-ſet, to reject a plan propoſed by an honourable and * attentive member of parliament, with very good intentions on his part, about a year or two ago. Sir, the plan I ſpeak of, was the tax of 25 *per cent.* moved upon places and penſions during the continuance of the American war.—Nothing, Sir, could have met my ideas more than ſuch a tax, if it was conſidered as a practical ſatire on that war, and as a penalty upon thoſe who led us into it; but in any other view it appeared to me very liable to objections. I conſidered the ſcheme as neither ſubſtantial, nor permanent, nor ſyſtematical, nor likely to be a corrective of evil influence. I have always thought employments a very proper ſubject of regulation, but a very ill-choſen ſubject for a tax. An equal tax upon property is reaſonable; becauſe the object is of the ſame quality throughout. The ſpecies is the ſame, it differs only in its quantity: but a tax upon ſalaries is totally of a different nature; there can be no equality, and conſequently no juſtice, in taxing them by the hundred, in the groſs.

We have, Sir, on our eſtabliſhment, ſeveral offices which perform real ſervice—We have alſo places that provide large rewards for no ſervice at all. We have ſtations which are made for the public decorum; made for preſerving the grace and majeſty of a great people.—We have likewiſe expenſive formalities, which tend rather to the diſgrace than the ornament of the ſtate and the court. This, Sir, is the real condition of our eſtabliſhments. To fall with the ſame ſeverity on objects ſo perfectly diſſimilar, is the very reverſe of a reformation. I mean a reformation framed,

* Thomas Gilbert, Eſq; member for Litchfield.

as

as all ſerious things ought to be, in number, weight, and meaſure.—Suppoſe, for inſtance, that two men receive a ſalary of £. 800 a year each.—In the office of one, there is nothing at all to be done; in the other, the occupier is oppreſſed by its duties.—Strike off twenty-five *per cent.* from theſe two offices, you take from one man £. 200, which in juſtice he ought to have, and you give in effect to the other £. 600, which he ought not to receive. The public robs the former, and the latter robs the public; and this mode of mutual robbery is the only way in which the office and the public can make up their accounts.

But the balance in ſettling the account of this double injuſtice, is much againſt the ſtate. The reſult is ſhort. You purchaſe a ſaving of two hundred pounds, by a profuſion of ſix. Beſides, Sir, whilſt you leave a ſupply of unſecured money behind, wholly at the diſcretion of miniſters, they make up the tax to ſuch places as they wiſh to favour, or in ſuch new places as they may chooſe to create. Thus the civil liſt becomes oppreſſed with debt; and the public is obliged to repay, and to repay with an heavy intereſt, what it has taken by an injudicious tax. Such has been the effect of the taxes hitherto laid on penſions and employments, and it is no encouragement to recur again to the ſame expedient.

In effect, ſuch a ſcheme is not calculated to produce, but to prevent reformation. It holds out a ſhadow of preſent gain to a greedy and neceſſitous public, to divert their attention from thoſe abuſes, which in reality are the great cauſes of their wants. It is a compoſition to ſtay enquiry; it is a fine paid by miſmanagement, for the renewal of its leaſe. What is worſe, it is a fine paid by induſtry and merit, for an indemnity to the idle and the worthleſs. But I ſhall ſay no more upon

this topic, becauſe (whatever may be given out to the contrary) I know that the noble lord in the blue ribbon perfectly agrees with me in theſe ſentiments.

After all that I have ſaid on this ſubject, I am ſo ſenſible, that it is our duty to try every thing which may contribute to the relief of the nation, that I do not attempt wholly to reprobate the idea even of a tax. Whenever, Sir, the incumbrance of uſeleſs office (which lies no leſs a dead weight upon the ſervice of the ſtate, than upon its revenues) ſhall be removed;—when the remaining offices ſhall be claſſed according to the juſt proportion of their rewards and ſervices, ſo as to admit the application of an equal rule to their taxation, when the diſcretionary power over the civil liſt caſh ſhall be ſo regulated, that a miniſter ſhall no longer have the means of repaying with a private, what is taken by a public hand—if after all theſe preliminary regulations, it ſhould be thought that a tax on places is an object worthy of the public attention, I ſhall be very ready to lend my hand to a reduction of their emoluments.

Having thus, Sir, not ſo much abſolutely rejected, as poſtponed, the plan of a taxation of office, —my next buſineſs was to find ſomething which might be really ſubſtantial and effectual. I am quite clear, that if we do not go to the very origin and firſt ruling cauſe of grievances, we do nothing. What does it ſignify to turn abuſes out of one door, if we are to let them in at another? What does it ſignify to promote œconomy upon a meaſure, and to ſuffer it to be ſubverted in the principle? Our miniſters are far from being wholly to blame for the preſent ill order which prevails. Whilſt inſtitutions directly repugnant to good management, are ſuffered to remain, no effectual or laſting reform *can* be introduced.

I therefore

I therefore thought it neceſſary, as ſoon as I conceived thoughts of ſubmitting to you ſome plan of reform, to take a comprehenſive view of the ſtate of this country; to make a ſort of ſurvey of its Juriſdictions, its Eſtates, and its Eſtabliſhments. Something, in every one of them, ſeemed to me to ſtand in the way of all œconomy in their adminiſtration, and prevented every poſſibility of methodizing the ſyſtem. But being, as I ought to be, doubtful of myſelf, I was reſolved not to proceed in an *arbitrary* manner, in any particular which tended to change the ſettled ſtate of things, or in any degree to affect the fortune or ſituation, the intereſt or the importance, of any individual. By an arbitrary proceeding, I mean one conducted by the private opinions, taſtes, or feelings, of the man who attempts to regulate. Theſe private meaſures are not ſtandards of the exchequer, nor balances of the ſanctuary. General principles cannot be debauched or corrupted by intereſt or caprice; and by thoſe principles I was reſolved to work.

Sir, before I proceed further, I will lay theſe principles fairly before you, that afterwards you may be in a condition to judge whether every object of regulation, as I propoſe it, comes fairly under its rule. This will exceedingly ſhorten all diſcuſſion between us, if we are perfectly in earneſt in eſtabliſhing a ſyſtem of good management. I therefore lay down to myſelf, ſeven fundamental rules; they might indeed be reduced to two or three ſimple maxims, but they would be too general, and their application to the ſeveral heads of the buſineſs, before us, would not be ſo diſtinct and viſible. I conceive then,

Firſt, That all juriſdictions which furniſh more matter of expence, more temptation to oppreſſion, or more means and

inſtruments of corrupt influence, than advantage to juſtice or political adminiſtration, ought to be aboliſhed.

Secondly, That all public eſtates which are more ſubſervient to the purpoſes of vexing, overawing, and influencing thoſe who hold under them, and to the expence of perception and management, than of benefit to the revenue, ought, upon every principle, both of revenue and of freedom, to be diſpoſed of.

Thirdly, That all offices which bring more charge than proportional advantage to the ſtate; that all offices which may be engrafted on others, uniting and ſimplifying their duties, ought, in the firſt caſe, to be taken away; and in the ſecond, to be conſolidated.

Fourthly, That all ſuch offices ought to be aboliſhed as obſtruct the proſpect of the general ſuperintendant of finance; which deſtroy his ſuperintendancy; which diſable him from foreſeeing and providing for charges as they may occur; from preventing expence in its origin, checking it in its progreſs, or ſecuring its application to its proper purpoſes. A miniſter under whom expences can be made without his knowledge, can never ſay what it is that he can ſpend or what it is that he can ſave.

Fifthly, That it is proper to eſtabliſh an invariable order in all payments; which will prevent partiality; which will give preference to ſervices, not according to the importunity of the demandant, but the rank and order of their utility or their juſtice.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, That it is right to reduce every eſtabliſhment, and every part of an eſtabliſhment (as nearly as poſſible) to certainty, the life of all order and good management.

Seventhly, That all ſubordinate treaſuries, as the nurſeries of miſmanagement, and as naturally drawing to themſelves as much money as they can, keeping it as long as they can, and accounting for it as late as they can, ought to be diſſolved. They have a tendency to perplex and diſtract the public accounts, and to excite a ſuſpicion of government, even beyond the extent of their abuſe.

Under the authority and with the guidance of thoſe principles, I proceed; wiſhing that nothing in any eſtabliſhment may be changed, where I am not able to make a ſtrong, direct, and ſolid application of thoſe principles, or of ſome one of them. An œconomical conſtitution is a neceſſary baſis for an œconomical adminiſtration.

Firſt, with regard to the ſovereign juriſdictions, I muſt obſerve, Sir, that whoever takes a view of this kingdom in a curſory manner, will imagine, that he beholds a ſolid, compacted, uniform ſyſtem of monarchy; in which all inferior juriſdictions are but as rays diverging from one center. But on examining it more nearly, you find much excentricity and confuſion. It is not a *Monarchy* in ſtrictneſs. But, as in the Saxon times this country was an heptarchy, it is now a ſtrange ſort of *Pentarchy*. It is divided into five ſeveral diſtinct principalities, beſides the ſupreme. There is indeed this difference from the Saxon times, that as in the itinerant exhibitions of the ſtage, for want of a complete company, they are obliged to caſt

a variety of parts on their chief performer; ſo our ſovereign condeſcends himſelf to act, not only the principal, but all the ſubordinate parts in the play. He condeſcends to diſſipate the royal character, and to triſle with thoſe light, ſubordinate, lackered ſceptres, in the hands that ſuſtain the ball which repreſents the world, or which wield the trident that commands the ocean. Croſs a brook, and you loſe the king of England; but you have ſome comfort in coming again under his majeſty, though "ſhorn of his beams," and no more than Prince of Wales. Go to the north, and you find him dwindled to a Duke of Lancaſter; turn to the weſt of that north, and he pops upon you in the humble character of Earl of Cheſter. Travel a few miles on, the Earl of Cheſter diſappears; and the king ſurpriſes you again as Count Palatine of Lancaſter. If you travel beyond Mount Edgecombe, you find him once more in his incognito, and He is Duke of Cornwall. So that, quite fatigued and ſatiated with this dull variety, you are infinitely refreſhed when you return to the ſphere of his proper ſplendor, and behold your amiable ſovereign in his true, ſimple, undiſguiſed, native character of majeſty.

In every one of theſe five Principalities, Dutchies, Palatinates, there is a regular eſtabliſhment of conſiderable expence, and moſt domineering influence. As his majeſty ſubmits to appear in this ſtate of ſubordination to himſelf, ſo his loyal peers and faithful commons attend his royal transformations; and are not ſo nice as to refuſe to nibble at thoſe crumbs of emolument, which conſole their petty metamorphoſes. Thus every one of theſe principalities has the apparatus of a kingdom, for the juriſdiction over a few private eſtates; and the formality and charge of the exchequer of Great Britain, for collecting the rents of a country

'ſquire.

'ſquire. Cornwall is the beſt of them; but when you compare the charge with the receipt, you will find that it furniſhes no exception to the general rule. The dutchy and county palatine of Lancaſter do not yield, as I have reaſon to believe, on an average of twenty years, four thouſand pounds a year, clear to the crown. As to Wales, and the county palatine of Cheſter, I have my doubts, whether their productive exchequer yields any returns at all. Yet one may ſay, that this revenue is more faithfully applied to its purpoſes than any of the reſt; as it exiſts for the ſole purpoſe of multiplying offices, and extending influence.

An attempt was lately made to improve this branch of local influence, and to transfer it to the fund of general corruption. I have on the ſeat behind me, the conſtitution of Mr. John Probert; a knight-errant, dubbed by the noble lord in the blue ribbon, and ſent to ſearch for revenues and adventures upon the mountains of Wales. The commiſſion is remarkable; and the event not leſs ſo. The commiſſion ſets forth, that "Upon a report of the *deputy auditor* (for there is a deputy auditor) of the principality of Wales, it appeared, that his majeſty's land-revenues in the ſaid principality, *are greatly diminiſhed*;"—and "that upon a *report* of the *ſurveyor general* of his majeſty's land revenues, upon a *memorial* of the auditor of his majeſty's revenues *within the ſaid principality*, that his mines and foreſts have produced very *little profit either to the public revenue or to individuals*;"—and therefore they appoint Mr. Probert, with a penſion of three hundred pounds a year from the ſaid principality, to try whether he can make any thing more of that very *little*

which is ſtated to be ſo *greatly* diminiſhed. "*A* "*beggarly account of empty boxes.*" And yet, Sir, you will remark—that this diminution from littleneſs (which ſerves only to prove the infinite diviſibility of matter) was not for want of the tender and officious care (as we ſee) of ſurveyors general, and ſurveyors particular; of auditors and deputy-auditors; not for want of memorials, and remonſtrances, and reports, and commiſſions, and conſtitutions, and inquiſitions, and penſions.

Probert, thus armed, and accoutred,—and paid, proceeded on his adventure;—but he was no ſooner arrived on the confines of Wales, than all Wales was in arms to meet him. That nation is brave, and full of ſpirit. Since the invaſion of king Edward, and the maſſacre of the bards, there never was ſuch a tumult, and alarm, and uproar, through the region of *Preſtatyn*. *Snowden* ſhook to its baſe; *Cader Edris* was looſened from its foundations. The fury of litigious war blew her horn on the mountains. The rocks poured down their goatherds, and the deep caverns vomited out their miners. Every thing above ground, and every thing under ground, was in arms.

In ſhort, Sir, to alight from my Welſh Pegaſus, and to come to level ground; the *Preux Chevalier* Probert went to look for revenue, like his maſters upon other occaſions; and like his maſters, he found rebellion. But we were grown cautious by experience. A civil war of paper might end in a more ſerious war; for now remonſtrance met remonſtrance, and memorial was oppoſed to memorial. The wiſe Britons thought it more reaſonable, that the poor, waſted, decrepit revenue of the principality, ſhould die a natural than a violent

violent death. They choſe that their ancient moſs-grown caſtles ſhould moulder into decay, under the ſilent touches of time, and the ſlow formality of an oblivious and drowſy exchequer, than that they ſhould be battered down all at once, by the lively efforts of a penſioned engineer. As it is the fortune of the noble lord to whom the auſpices of this campaign belonged, frequently to provoke reſiſtance, ſo it is his rule and his nature to yield to that reſiſtance *in all caſes whatſoever*. He was true to himſelf on this occaſion. He ſubmitted with ſpirit to the ſpirited remonſtrances of the Welch. Mr. Probert gave up his adventure, and keeps his penſion—and ſo ends " the famous hiſtory of the " revenue adventures of the bold Baron North, " and the good Knight Probert, upon the moun- " tains of Venodotia."

In ſuch a ſtate is the exchequer of Wales at preſent, that, upon the report of the treaſury itſelf, its *little* revenue is *greatly* diminiſhed; and we ſee by the whole of this ſtrange tranſaction, that an attempt to improve it, produces reſiſtance; the reſiſtance produces ſubmiſſion; and the whole ends in penſion *.

It is nearly the ſame with the revenues of the dutchy of Lancaſter. To do nothing with them is extinction; to improve them is oppreſſion. Indeed, the whole of the eſtates which ſupport theſe minor principalities, is made up, not of revenues,

* Here Lord North ſhook his head, and told thoſe who ſat near him, that Mr. Probert's penſion was to depend on his ſucceſs. It may be ſo. Mr. Probert's penſion was, however, no eſſential part of the queſtion; nor did Mr. B. care whether he ſtill poſſeſſed it or not. His point was, to ſhew the ridicule of attempting an improvement of the Welſh revenue under its preſent eſtabliſhment.

and

and rents, and profitable fines, but of claims, of pretenſions, of vexations, of litigations. They are exchequers of unfrequent receipt, and conſtant charge; a ſyſtem of finances not fit for an œconomiſt who would be rich; not fit for a prince who would govern his ſubjects with equity and juſtice.

It is not only between prince and ſubject, that theſe mock juriſdictions, and mimic revenues, produce great miſchief. They excite among the people a ſpirit of informing, and delating; a ſpirit of ſupplanting and undermining one another. So that many in ſuch circumſtances, conceive it advantageous to them, rather to continue ſubject to vexation themſelves, than to give up the means and chance of vexing others. It is exceedingly common for men to contract their love to their country, into an attachment to its petty ſubdiviſions; and they ſometimes even cling to their provincial abuſes, as if they were franchiſes, and local privileges. Accordingly, in places where there is much of this kind of eſtate, perſons will be always found, who would rather truſt to their talents in recommending themſelves to power for the renewal of their intereſts, than to incumber their purſes, though never ſo lightly, in order to tranſmit independence to their poſterity. It is a great miſtake, that the deſire of ſecuring property is univerſal among mankind. Gaming is a principle inherent in human nature. It belongs to us all. I would therefore break thoſe tables; I would furniſh no evil occupation for that ſpirit; I would make every man look every where, except to the intrigue of a court, for the improvement of his circumſtances, or the ſecurity of his fortune. I have in my eye a very ſtrong caſe in the dutchy of Lancaſter (which lately occupied

Weſtminſter

Weſtminſter-hall, and the houſe of lords) as my voucher for many of theſe reflections *.

For what plauſible reaſon are theſe principalities ſuffered to exiſt? When a government is rendered complex (which in itſelf is no deſirable thing) it ought to be for ſome political end, which cannot be anſwered otherwiſe. Subdiviſions in government, are only admiſſible in favour of the dignity of inferior princes, and high nobility; or for the ſupport of an ariſtocratic confederacy under ſome head; or for the conſervation of the franchiſes of the people in ſome privileged province. Such, for the two former of theſe ends, are the ſubdiviſions in favour of the electoral, and other princes in the empire; for the latter of theſe purpoſes, are the juriſdictions of the imperial cities, and the Hanſe towns. For the latter of theſe ends, are alſo the countries of the States [*Pais d'Etats*] and certain cities, and orders in France. Theſe are all regulations with an object, and ſome of them with a very good object. But how are the principles of any of theſe ſubdiviſions applicable in the caſe before us?

Do they anſwer any purpoſe to the king? The principality of Wales was given by patent to Edward the Black Prince, on the ground on which it has ſtood ever ſince.—Lord Coke ſagaciouſly obſerves upon it, "That in the charter of creating "the Black Prince Edward prince of Wales, "there is a *great myſtery* — for *leſs* than an eſ- "tate of inheritance, ſo *great* a prince *could* not "have, and an *abſolute eſtate of inheritance* in ſo "*great* a principality as Wales (this principality "being *ſo dear* to him) he *ſhould* not have; and

* Caſe of Richard Lee, Eſq; Appellant, againſt George Venables Lord Vernon, Reſpondent, in the year 1776.

"therefore

" therefore it was made, *ſibi et heredibus ſuis regi-*
" *bus Angliæ*, that by his deceaſe, or attaining to
" the crown, it might be extinguiſhed in the
" crown."

For the ſake of this fooliſh *myſtery*, of what a great prince *could* not have *leſs*, and *ſhould* not have *ſo much*, of a principality which was too *dear* to be given, and too *great* to be kept—and for no other cauſe, that ever I could find —this form and ſhadow of a principality without any ſubſtance, has been maintained. That you may judge in this inſtance (and it ſerves for the reſt) of the difference between a great and a little œconomy, you will pleaſe to recollect, Sir, that Wales may be about the tenth part of England in ſize and population; and certainly not a hundredth part in opulence. Twelve judges perform the whole of the buſineſs, both of the ſtationary and the itinerant juſtice of this kingdom; but for Wales, there are eight judges. There is in Wales an exchequer, as well as in all the dutchies, according to the very beſt and moſt authentic abſurdity of form. There are in all of them, a hundred more difficult trifles and laborious fooleries, which ſerve no other purpoſe than to keep alive corrupt hope and ſervile dependence.

Theſe principalities are ſo far from contributing to the eaſe of the king, to his wealth, or his dignity, that they render both his ſupreme and his ſubordinate authority, perfectly ridiculous. It was but the other day, that that pert, factious fellow, the duke of Lancaſter, preſumed to fly in the face of his liege lord, our gracious ſovereign; and *aſſociating* with a parcel of lawyers as factious as himſelf, to the deſtruction of *all law and order*, and *in committees leading directly to rebellion* — preſumed to go to law with the king. The ob-

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ject is neither your buſineſs, nor mine. Which of the parties got the better, I really forget. I think it was (as it ought to be) the king. The material point is, that the ſuit coſt about fifteen thouſand pounds. But as the duke of Lancaſter is but a ſort of *duke Humphrey*, and not worth a groat, our ſovereign was obliged to pay the coſts of both. Indeed this art of converting a great monarch into a little prince, this royal maſquerading, is a very dangerous and expenſive amuſement; and one of the king's *menus plaiſirs*, which ought to be reformed. This dutchy, which is not worth four thouſand pounds a year at beſt, to *revenue*, is worth forty or fifty thouſand to *influence*.

The dutchy of *Lancaſter*, and the county palatine of *Lancaſter*, anſwered, I admit, ſome purpoſe in their original creation. They tended to make a ſubject imitate a prince. When *Henry the fourth* from that ſtair aſcended the throne, high-minded as he was, he was not willing to kick away the ladder. To prevent that principality from being extinguiſhed in the crown, he ſevered it by act of parliament. He had a motive, ſuch as it was. He thought his title to the crown unſound, and his poſſeſſion inſecure. He therefore managed a retreat in his dutchy; which *lord Coke* calls (I do not know why) *par multis regnis*. He flattered himſelf that it was practicable to make a projecting point half way down, to break his fall from the precipice of royalty; as if it were poſſible for one who had loſt a kingdom to keep any thing elſe. However, it is evident that he thought ſo. When *Henry the fifth* united, by act of parliament, the eſtates of his mother to the dutchy, he had the ſame predilection with his father, to the root of his family honours, and the ſame policy in enlarging the

the ſphere of a poſſible retreat from the ſlippery royalty of the two great crowns he held. All this was changed by *Edward the fourth*. He had no ſuch family partialities, and his policy was the reverſe of that of Henry the fourth and Henry the fifth. He accordingly again united the dutchy of Lancaſter to the crown. But when *Henry the ſeventh*, who choſe to conſider himſelf as of the houſe of Lancaſter, came to the throne, he brought with him the old pretenſions, and the old politics of that houſe. A new act of parliament, a ſecond time, diſſevered the dutchy of Lancaſter from the crown; and in that line things continued until the ſubverſion of the monarchy, when principalities and powers fell along with the throne. The dutchy of Lancaſter muſt have been extinguiſhed, if *Cromwell*, who began to form ideas of aggrandizing his houſe, and raiſing the ſeveral branches of it, had not cauſed the dutchy to be again ſeparated from the commonwealth, by an act of the parliament of thoſe times.

What partiality, what objects of the politics of the houſe of Lancaſter, or of Cromwell, has his preſent majeſty, or his majeſty's family? What power have they within any of theſe principalities, which they have not within their kingdom? In what manner is the dignity of the nobility concerned in theſe principalities? What rights have the ſubject there, which they have not at leaſt equally in every other part of the nation. Theſe diſtinctions exiſt for no good end to the king, to the nobility, or to the people. They ought not to exiſt at all. If the crown (contrary to its nature, but moſt conformably to the whole tenor of the advice that has been lately given) ſhould ſo far forget its dignity, as to contend, that theſe juriſdictions and revenues are eſtates of private property, I am rather for acting as if that groundleſs

groundleſs claim were of ſome weight, than for giving up that eſſential part of the reform. I would value the clear income, and give a clear annuity to the crown, taken on the medium produce for twenty years.

If the crown has any favourite name or title, if the ſubject has any matter of local accommodation within any of theſe juriſdictions, it is meant to preſerve them; and to improve them, if any improvement can be ſuggeſted. As to the crown reverſions or titles upon the property of the people there, it is propoſed to convert them from a ſnare to their independance, into a relief from their burthens. I propoſe, therefore, to unite all the five principalities to the crown, and to its ordinary juriſdiction, to aboliſh all thoſe offices that produce an uſeleſs and chargeable ſeparation from the body of the people,—to compenſate thoſe who do not hold their offices (if any ſuch there are) at the pleaſure of the crown,—to extinguiſh vexatious titles by an act of ſhort limitation,—to ſell thoſe unprofitable eſtates which ſupport uſeleſs juriſdictions, and to turn the tenant-right into a fee, on ſuch moderate terms as will be better for the ſtate than its preſent right, and which it is impoſſible for any rational tenant to refuſe.

As to the Dutchies, their judicial œconomy may be provided for without charge. They have only to fall of courſe into the common county adminiſtration. A commiſſion more or leſs made or omitted, ſettles the matter fully. As to Wales, it has been propoſed to add a judge to the ſeveral courts of Weſtminſter-hall; and it has been conſidered as an improvement in itſelf. For my part, I cannot pretend to ſpeak upon it with clearneſs or with deciſion; but certainly this arrangement would be more than ſufficient for Wales. My

original thought was to ſuppreſs five of the eight judges; and to leave the chief juſtice of Cheſter, with the two ſenior judges; and, to facilitate the buſineſs, to throw the twelve counties into ſix diſtricts, holding the ſeſſions alternately in the counties of which each diſtrict ſhall be compoſed. But on this I ſhall be more clear, when I come to the particular bill.

Sir, the houſe will now ſee whether, in praying for judgment againſt the minor principalities, I do not act in conformity to the laws that I had laid down to myſelf, of getting rid of every juriſdiction more ſubſervient to oppreſſion and expence, than to any end of juſtice or honeſt policy; of aboliſhing offices more expenſive than uſeful; of combining duties improperly ſeparated; of changing revenues more vexatious than productive, into ready money; of ſuppreſſing offices which ſtand in the way of œconomy; and of cutting off lurking ſubordinate treaſuries. Diſpute the rules; controvert the application; or give your hands to this ſalutary meaſure.

Moſt of the ſame rules will be found applicable to my ſecond object — *the landed eſtate of the crown.* A landed eſtate is certainly the very worſt which the crown can poſſeſs. All minute and diſperſed poſſeſſions, poſſeſſions that are often of indeterminate value, and which require a continued perſonal attendance, are of a nature more proper for private management, than public adminiſtration.—They are fitter for the care of a frugal land ſteward, than of an office in the ſtate. Whatever they may poſſibly have been in other times, or in other countries, they are not of magnitude enough with us, to occupy a public department, nor to provide for a public object. They are already given up to parliament, and the gift is not of great value. Common prudence dictates, even

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in the management of private affairs, that all diſperſed and chargeable eſtates, ſhould be ſacrificed to the relief of eſtates more compact and better circumſtanced.

If it be objected, that theſe lands at preſent would ſell at a low market; this is anſwered, by ſhewing that money is at high price. The one balances the other. Lands ſell at the current rate, and nothing can ſell for more. But be the price what it may, a great object is always anſwered, whenever any property is transferr'd from hands that are not fit for that property, to thoſe that are. The buyer and ſeller muſt mutually profit by ſuch a bargain; and, what rarely happens in matters of revenue, the relief of the ſubject will go hand in hand with the profit of the exchequer.

As to the *foreſt lands*, in which the Crown has (where they are not granted or preſcriptively held) the *dominion* of the *ſoil*, and the *vert* and *veniſon*; that is to ſay, the timber and the game, and in which the people have a variety of rights, in common of herbage, and other commons, according to the uſage of the ſeveral foreſts;—I propoſe to have thoſe rights of the crown valued as manerial rights are valued on an incloſure; and a defined portion of land to be given for them; which land is to be ſold for the public benefit.

As to the timber, I propoſe a ſurvey of the whole. What is uſeleſs for the naval purpoſes of the kingdom, I would condemn, and diſpoſe of, for the ſecurity of what may be uſeful; and to incloſe ſuch other parts as may be moſt fit to furniſh a perpetual ſupply; wholly extinguiſhing, for a very obvious reaſon, all right of *veniſon* in thoſe parts.

The foreſt *rights* which extend over the lands and poſſeſſions of others, being of no profit to the crown, and a grievance, as far as it goes, to the

 ſubject;

ſubject; theſe I propoſe to extinguiſh without charge to the proprietors. The ſeveral commons are to be allotted and compenſated for upon ideas which I ſhall hereafter explain. They are nearly the ſame with the principles upon which you have acted in private incloſures. I ſhall never quit precedents where I find them applicable. For thoſe regulations and compenſations, and for every other part of the detail, you will be ſo indulgent as to give me credit for the preſent.

The revenue to be obtained from the ſale of the foreſt lands and rights, will not be ſo conſiderable, as many people have imagined; and it would be unwiſe to ſcrew it up to the utmoſt; or even to ſuffer bidders to inhance, according to their eagerneſs, the purchaſe of theſe lands, when the expence of that purchaſe may weaken the capital to be employed in their cultivation. This, I am well aware, might give room for partiality in the diſpoſal. In my opinion it would be the leſſer evil of the two. But ſurely a rule of fair preference might be eſtabliſhed, which would take away all ſort of unjuſt and corrupt partiality. The principal revenue which I propoſe to draw from theſe uncultivated waſtes, is to ſpring from the improvement and population of the kingdom; which never can happen, without producing an improvement more advantageous to the revenues of the crown, than the rents of the beſt landed eſtate which it can hold. It will hardly be neceſſary for me to add, that in this ſale I naturally except all the houſes, gardens, and parks belonging to the crown, and ſuch one foreſt as ſhall be choſen by his majeſty, as beſt accommodated to his pleaſures.

By means of this part of the reform, will fall the expenſive office of *ſurveyor general*, with all the

the influence that attends it. By this, will fall *two chief juſtices in Eyre*, with all their train of dependents. You need be under no apprehenſion, Sir, that your office is to be touched in its emoluments. They are yours by law; and they are but a moderate part of the compenſation which is given to you for the ability with which you execute an office of quite another ſort of importance: it is far from overpaying your diligence; or more than ſufficient for ſuſtaining the high rank you ſtand in, as the firſt gentleman of England. As to the duties of your chief juſticeſhip, they are very different from thoſe for which you have received the office. Your dignity is too high for a juriſdiction over wild beaſts; and your learning and talents too valuable to be waſted as chief juſtice of a deſert. I cannot reconcile it to myſelf, that you, Sir, ſhould be ſtuck up as a uſeleſs piece of antiquity.

I have now diſpoſed of the unprofitable landed eſtates of the crown, and thrown them into the maſs of private property; by which they will come, through the courſe of circulation, and through the political ſecretions of the ſtate, into our better underſtood and better ordered revenues.

I come next to the great ſupreme body of the civil government itſelf. I approach it with that awe and reverence with which a young phyſician approaches to the cure of the diſorders of his parent. Diſorders, Sir, and infirmities, there are — ſuch diſorders, that all attempts towards method, prudence, and frugality, will be perfectly vain, whilſt a ſyſtem of confuſion remains, which is not only alien but adverſe to all œconomy; a ſyſtem, which is not only prodigal in its very eſſence, but cauſes every thing elſe which belongs to it to be prodigally conducted.

It is impoſſible, Sir, for any perſon to be an œconomiſt where no order in payments is eſtabliſhed; it is impoſſible for a man to be an œconomiſt, who is not able to take a comparative view of his means, and of his expences, for the year which lies before him; it is impoſſible for a man to be an œconomiſt, under whom various officers in their ſeveral departments may ſpend,—even juſt what they pleaſe,—and often with an emulation of expence, as contributing to the importance, if not profit, of their ſeveral departments.—— Thus much is certain; that neither the preſent, nor any other firſt lord of the treaſury, has been ever able to take a ſurvey, or to make even a tolerable gueſs, of the expences of government for any one year; ſo as to enable him with the leaſt degree of certainty, or even probability, to bring his affairs within compaſs. Whatever ſcheme may be formed upon them, muſt be made on a calculation of chances. As things are circumſtanced, the firſt lord of the treaſury cannot make an eſtimate. I am ſure I ſerve the king, and I am ſure I aſſiſt adminiſtration, by putting œconomy, at leaſt in their power. We muſt *claſs ſervices*; we muſt (as far as their nature admits) *appropriate* funds; or every thing however reformed, will fall again into the old confuſion.

Coming upon this ground of the civil liſt, the firſt thing in dignity and charge that attracts our notice, is the *royal houſehold*. This eſtabliſhment, in my opinion, is exceedingly abuſive in its conſtitution. It is formed upon manners and cuſtoms, that have long ſince expired. In the firſt place, it is formed, in many reſpects, upon *feudal principles*. In the feudal times, it was not uncommon, even among ſubjects, for the loweſt offices to be held by conſiderable perſons; perſons as unfit by their incapacity, as improper from

from their rank, to occupy ſuch employments. They were held by patent, ſometimes for life, and ſometimes by inheritance. If my memory does not deceive me, a perſon of no ſlight conſideration, held the office of patent hereditary cook to an earl of Warwick—The earl of Warwick's ſoups, I fear, were not the better for the dignity of his kitchen. I think it was an earl of Glouceſter, who officiated as ſteward of the houſehold to the archbiſhops of Canterbury. Inſtances of the ſame kind may in ſome degree be found in the Northumberland houſe-book, and other family records. There was ſome reaſon in ancient neceſſities, for theſe ancient cuſtoms. Protection was wanted; and the domeſtic tie, though not the higheſt, was the cloſeſt.

The king's houſehold has not only ſeveral ſtrong traces of this *feudality*, but it is formed alſo upon the principles of a *Body-corporate*. It has its own magiſtrates, courts, and by-laws. This might be neceſſary in the antient times, in order to have a government within itſelf, capable of regulating the vaſt and often unruly multitude which compoſed and attended it. This was the origin of the antient court called the *Green Cloth* — compoſed of the marſhal, treaſurer, and other great officers of the houſehold, with certain clerks. The rich ſubjects of the kingdom, who had formerly the ſame eſtabliſhments (only on a reduced ſcale) have ſince altered their œconomy; and turned the courſe of their expence, from the maintenance of vaſt eſtabliſhments within their walls, to the employment of a great variety of independent trades abroad. Their influence is leſſened; but a mode of accommodation and a ſtyle of ſplendour, ſuited to the manners of the times, has been encreaſed. Royalty itſelf has inſenſibly followed; and the royal houſehold has been carried away by the reſiſtleſs tide of manners: but with this very material difference.

Private men have got rid of the eſtabliſhments along with the reaſons of them; whereas the royal houſehold has loſt all that was ſtately and venerable in the antique manners, without retrenching any thing of the cumbrous charge of a Gothic eſtabliſhment. It is ſhrunk into the poliſhed littleneſs of modern elegance and perſonal accommodation. It has evaporated from the groſs concrete, into an eſſence and rectified ſpirit of expence, where you have tuns of antient pomp in a vial of modern luxury.

But when the reaſon of old eſtabliſhments is gone, it is abſurd to preſerve nothing but the burthen of them. This is ſuperſtitiouſly to embalm a carcaſs not worth an ounce of the gums that are uſed to preſerve it. It is to burn precious oils in the tomb; it is to offer meat and drink to the dead,—not ſo much an honour to the deceaſed, as a diſgrace to the ſurvivors. Our palaces are vaſt inhoſpitable halls. There the bleak winds, there, "Boreas, and Eurus, and Caurus, and Argeſtes loud," howling through the vacant lobbies, and clattering the doors of deſerted guard-rooms, appal the imagination, and conjure up the grim ſpectres of departed tyrants—the Saxon, the Norman, and the Dane; the ſtern Edwards and fierce Henrys—who ſtalk from deſolation to deſolation, through the dreary vacuity, and melancholy ſucceſſion of chill and comfortleſs chambers. When this tumult ſubſides, a dead, and ſtill more frightful ſilence would reign in this deſert, if every now and then the tacking of hammers did not announce, that thoſe conſtant attendants upon all courts, in all ages, Jobbs, were ſtill alive; for whoſe ſake alone it is, that any trace of ancient grandeur is ſuffered to remain. Theſe palaces are a true emblem of ſome governments; the inhabitants are decayed, but the governors and magiſtrates ſtill flouriſh. They put me in mind of *Old Sarum*,

Sarum, where the repreſentatives, more in number than the conſtituents, only ſerve to inform us, that that this was once a place of trade, and ſounding with "the buſy hum of men," though now you can only trace the ſtreets by the colour of the corn; and its ſole manufacture is in members of parliament.

Theſe old eſtabliſhments were formed alſo on a third principle, ſtill more adverſe to the living economy of the age. They were formed, Sir, on the principle of *purveyance*, and *receipt in kind*. In former days, when the houſehold was vaſt, and the ſupply ſcanty and precarious, the royal purveyors, ſallying forth from under the Gothic portcullis, to purchaſe proviſion with power and prerogative, inſtead of money, brought home the plunder of an hundred markets, and all that could be ſeized from a flying and hiding country, and depoſited their ſpoil in an hundred caverns, with each its keeper. There, every commodity, received in its raweſt condition, went through all the proceſs which fitted it for uſe. This inconvenient receipt produced an œconomy ſuited only to itſelf. It multiplied offices beyond all meaſure; buttery, pantry, and all that rabble of places, which, though profitable to the holders and expenſive to the ſtate, are almoſt too mean to mention.

All this might be, and I believe was neceſſary at firſt; for it is remarkable, that *purveyance*, after its regulation had been the ſubject of a long line of ſtatutes, (not fewer, I think, than twenty-ſix) was wholly taken away by the twelfth of Charles the ſecond; yet in the next year of the ſame reign, it was found neceſſary to revive it by a ſpecial act of parliament, for the ſake of the king's journies. This, Sir, is curious; and what would hardly be expected in ſo reduced a court as that of Charles the ſecond, and in ſo improved a

country as England might then be thought. But ſo it was. In our time, one well filled and well covered ſtage-coach, requires more accommodation than a royal progreſs; and every diſtrict at an hour's warning, can ſupply an army.

I do not ſay, Sir, that all theſe eſtabliſhments whoſe principle is gone, have been ſyſtematically kept up for influence ſolely: neglect had its ſhare. But this I am ſure of, that a conſideration of influence has hindered any one from attempting to pull them down. For the purpoſes of influence, and for thoſe purpoſes only, are retained half at leaſt of the houſehold eſtabliſhments. No revenue, no not a royal revenue, can exiſt under the accumulated charge of antient eſtabliſhment; modern luxury; and parliamentary political corruption.

If therefore we aim at regulating this houſehold, the queſtion will be, whether we ought to œconomize by *detail*, or by *principle?* The example we have had of the ſucceſs of an attempt to œconomize by detail, and under eſtabliſhments adverſe to the attempt, may tend to decide this queſtion.

At the beginning of his majeſty's reign, Lord Talbot came to the adminiſtration of a great department in the houſehold. I believe no man ever entered into his majeſty's ſervice, or into the ſervice of any prince, with a more clear integrity, or with more zeal and affection for the intereſt of his maſter; and I muſt add, with abilities for a ſtill higher ſervice. Œconomy was then announced as a maxim of the reign. This noble lord, therefore, made ſeveral attempts towards a reform. In the year 1777, when the king's civil liſt debts came laſt to be paid, he explained very fully the ſucceſs of his undertaking. He told the houſe of lords, that he had attempted to reduce the charges

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of the king's tables, and his kitchen.—The thing, Sir, was not below him. He knew, that there is nothing intereſting in the concerns of men, whom we love and honour, that is beneath our attention.—" Love," ſays one of our old poets, " eſ-" teems no office mean;" and with ſtill more ſpirit, " Entire affection ſcorneth nicer hands." Frugality, Sir, is founded on the principle, that all riches have limits. A royal houſehold, grown enormous, even in the meaneſt departments, may weaken and perhaps deſtroy all energy in the higheſt offices of the ſtate. The gorging a royal kitchen may ſtint and famiſh the negotiations of a kingdom. Therefore, the object was worthy of his, was worthy of any man's attention.

In conſequence of this noble lord's reſolution, (as he told the other houſe) he reduced ſeveral tables, and put the perſons entitled to them upon board wages, much to their own ſatisfaction. But unluckily, ſubſequent duties requiring conſtant attendance, it was not poſſible to prevent their being fed where they were employed—and thus this firſt ſtep towards œconomy doubled the expence.

There was another diſaſter far more doleful than this. I ſhall ſtate it, as the cauſe of that misfortune lies at the bottom of almoſt all our prodigality. Lord Talbot attempted to reform the kitchen; but ſuch, as he well obſerved, is the conſequence of having duty done by one perſon, whilſt another enjoys the emoluments, that he found himſelf fruſtrated in all his deſigns. On that rock his whole adventure ſplit—His whole ſcheme of œconomy was daſhed to pieces; his department became more expenſive than ever;—the civil liſt debt accumulated—Why? It was truly from a cauſe, which, though perfectly adequate to the effect, one would not have inſtantly gueſſed;—It was becauſe the *turnſpit in the king's kitchen*

was

*was a member of parliament**. The king's domeſtic ſervants were all undone; his tradeſmen remained unpaid, and became bankrupt—*becauſe the turnſpit of the king's kitchen was a member of parliament.* His majeſty's ſlumbers were interrupted, his pillow was ſtuffed with thorns, and his peace of mind entirely broken,—*becauſe the king's turnſpit was a member of parliament.* The judges were unpaid; the juſtice of the kingdom bent and gave way; the foreign miniſters remained inactive and unprovided; the ſyſtem of Europe was diſſolved; the chain of our alliances was broken; all the wheels of government at home and abroad were ſtopped;—*becauſe the king's turnſpit was a member of parliament.*

Such, Sir, was the ſituation of affairs, and ſuch the cauſe of that ſituation, when his majeſty came a ſecond time to parliament, to deſire the payment of thoſe debts which the employment of its members in various offices, viſible and inviſible, had occaſioned. I believe that a like fate will attend every attempt at œconomy by detail, under ſimilar circumſtances, and in every department. A complex operoſe office of account and controul, is in itſelf, and even if members of parliament had nothing to do with it, the moſt prodigal of all things. The moſt audacious robberies, or the moſt ſubtle frauds, would never venture upon ſuch a waſte, as an over careful, detailed guard againſt them will infallibly produce. In our eſtabliſhments, we frequently ſee an office of account, of an hundred pounds a year expence, and another office, of an equal expence, to controul that office, and the whole upon a matter that is not worth twenty ſhillings.

To avoid, therefore, this minute care which produces the conſequences of the moſt extenſive neglect, and to oblige members of parliament to

* *Vide* Lord Talbot's ſpeech, in Almon's Parliamentary Regiſter, vol. vii. p. 79 of the Proceedings of the Lords.

attend

attend to public cares, and not to the ſervile offices of domeſtic management, I propoſe, Sir, to *œconomize by principle*, that is, I propoſe, to put affairs into that train, which experience points out as the moſt effectual, from the nature of things, and from the conſtitution of the human mind. In all dealings, where it is poſſible, the principles of radical œconomy preſcribe three things; firſt, undertaking by the great; ſecondly, engaging with perſons of ſkill in the ſubject matter; thirdly, engaging with thoſe who ſhall have an immediate and direct intereſt in the proper execution of the buſineſs.

To avoid frittering and crumbling down the attention, by a blind unſyſtematic obſervance of every trifle, it has ever been found the beſt way, to do all things, which are great in the total amount, and minute in the component parts, by a *general contract*. The principles of trade have ſo pervaded every ſpecies of dealing, from the higheſt to the loweſt objects; all tranſactions are got ſo much into ſyſtem; that we may, at a moment's warning, and to a farthing value, be informed at what rate any ſervice may be ſupplied. No dealing is exempt from the poſſibility of fraud. But by a contract on a matter certain, you have this advantage—you are ſure to know the utmoſt *extent* of the fraud to which you are ſubject. By a contract with a perſon in *his own trade*, you are ſure you ſhall not ſuffer by *want of ſkill*. By a *ſhort* contract you are ſure of making it the *intereſt* of the contractor to exert that ſkill for the ſatisfaction of his employers.

I mean to derogate nothing from the diligence or integrity of the preſent, or of any former board of green-cloth. But what ſkill can members of parliament obtain in that low kind of province? What pleaſure can they have in the execution of

that kind of duty? And if they ſhould neglect it, how does it affect their intereſt, when we know, that it is their vote in parliament, and not their diligence in cookery or catering, that recommends them to their office, or keeps them in it?

I therefore propoſe, that the king's tables (to whatever number of tables, or covers to each, he ſhall think proper to command) ſhould be claſſed by the ſteward of the houſehold, and ſhould be contracted for, according to their rank, by the head or cover;—that the eſtimate and circumſtance of the contract ſhould be carried to the treaſury to be approved; and that its faithful and ſatisfactory performance ſhould be reported there, previous to any payment; that there, and there only, ſhould the payment be made. I propoſe, that men ſhould be contracted with only in their proper trade; and that no member of parliament ſhould be capable of ſuch contract. By this plan, almoſt all the infinite offices under the lord ſteward may be ſpared; to the extreme ſimplification, and to the far better execution, of every one of his functions. The king of Pruſſia is ſo ſerved. He is a great and eminent (though indeed a very rare) inſtance of the poſſibility of uniting in a mind of vigour and compaſs, an attention to minute objects, with the largeſt views, and the moſt complicated plans. His tables are ſerved by contract, and by the head. Let me ſay, that no prince can be aſhamed to imitate the king of Pruſſia; and particularly to learn in his ſchool, when the problem is—"The "beſt manner of reconciling the ſtate of a court "with the ſupport of war?" Other courts, I underſtand, have followed him with effect, and to their ſatisfaction.

The ſame clue of principle leads us through the labyrinth of the other departments. What, Sir, is there in the office of *the great wardrobe* (which has

has the care of the king's furniture) that may not be executed by the *lord chamberlain* himſelf. He has an honourable appointment; he has time ſufficient to attend to the duty; and he has the vice chamberlain to aſſiſt him. Why ſhould not he deal alſo by contract, for all things belonging to this office, and carry his eſtimates firſt, and his report of the execution in its proper time, for payment, directly to the board of treaſury itſelf? By a ſimple operation (containing in it a treble control) the expences of a department, which for naked walls, or walls hung with cobwebs, has in a few years coſt the crown £. 150,000, may at length hope for regulation. But, Sir, the office and its buſineſs are at variance. As it ſtands, it ſerves, not to furniſh the palace with its hangings, but the parliament with its dependent members.

To what end, Sir, does the office of *removing wardrobe* ſerve at all? Why ſhould a *jewel office* exiſt for the ſole purpoſe of taxing the king's gifts of plate? Its object falls naturally within the *chamberlain*'s province; and ought to be under his care and inſpection, without any fee. Why ſhould an office of the *robes* exiſt, when that of *groom of the ſtole* is a ſinecure, and that this is a proper object of his department?

All theſe incumbrances, which are themſelves nuſances, produce other incumbrances, and other nuſances. For the payment of theſe uſeleſs eſtabliſhments, there are no leſs than *three uſeleſs treaſurers*; two to hold a purſe, and one to play with a ſtick. The treaſurer of the houſehold is a mere name. The cofferer, and the treaſurer of the chamber, receive and pay great ſums, which it is not at all neceſſary *they* ſhould either receive or pay. All the proper officers, ſervants, and tradeſmen, may be inrolled in their ſeveral departments, and paid in proper claſſes and times

with

with great ſimplicity and order, at the exchequer, and by direction from the treaſury.

The *board of works*, which in the ſeven years preceding 1777, has coſt towards £. 400,000*; and (if I recollect rightly) has not coſt leſs in proportion from the beginning of the reign, is under the very ſame deſcription of all the other ill-contrived eſtabliſhments, and calls for the very ſame reform. We are to ſeek for the viſible ſigns of all this expence.—For all this expence, we do not ſee a building of the ſize and importance of a pigeon-houſe. Buckingham-houſe was repriſed by a bargain with the public, for one hundred thouſand pounds;—and the ſmall houſe at Windſor has been, if I miſtake not, undertaken ſince that account was brought before us. The good works of that board of works, are as carefully concealed, as other good works ought to be. They are perfectly inviſible. But though it is the perfection of charity to be concealed, it is, Sir, the property and glory of magnificence, to appear, and ſtand forward to the eye.

That board, which ought to be a concern of builders, and ſuch like, and of none elſe, is turned into a junto of members of parliament. That office too has a *treaſury*, and a paymaſter of its own; and leſt the arduous affairs of that important exchequer ſhould be too fatiguing, that paymaſter has a deputy to partake his profits, and relieve his cares. I do not believe, that either now or in former times, the chief managers of that board have made any profit of its abuſe. It is, however, no good reaſon that an abuſive eſtabliſhment ſhould ſubſiſt, becauſe it is of as little private as of public advantage. But this eſtabliſhment has the grand radical fault, the original ſin, that pervades and perverts all our

* More exactly £. 378,616. 10*s*. 1*d*. ¾.

eſtabliſhments;

eſtabliſhments;—The apparatus is not fitted to the object, nor the workmen to the work. Expences are incurred on the private opinion of an inferior eſtabliſhment, without conſulting the principal; who can alone determine the proportion which it ought to bear to the other eſtabliſhments of the ſtate, in the order of their relative importance.

I propoſe, therefore, along with the reſt, to pull down this whole ill-contrived ſcaffolding, which obſtructs, rather than forwards our public works; to take away its treaſury; to put the whole into the hands of a real builder, who ſhall not be a member of parliament; and to oblige him by a previous eſtimate and final payment, to appear twice at the treaſury, before the public can be loaded. The king's gardens are to come under a ſimilar regulation.

The *mint*, though not a department of the houſehold, has the ſame vices. It is a great expence to the nation, chiefly for the ſake of members of parliament. It has its officers of parade and dignity. It has its treaſury too. It is a ſort of corporate body; and formerly was a body of great importance; as much ſo, on the then ſcale of things, and the then order of buſineſs, as the bank is at this day. It was the great center of money tranſactions and remittances for our own, and for other nations; until king Charles the firſt, among other arbitrary projects, dictated by deſpotic neceſſity, made him withhold the money that lay there for remittance. That blow, (and happily too) the mint never recover'd. Now it is no bank; no remittance-ſhop. The mint, Sir, is a *manufacture*, and it is nothing elſe; and it ought to be undertaken upon the principles of a manufacture; that is, for the beſt and cheapeſt execution, by a contract, upon proper ſecurities, and under proper regulations.

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The *artillery* is a far greater object; it is a military concern; but having an affinity and kindred in its defects with the eſtabliſhments I am now ſpeaking of, I think it beſt to ſpeak of it along with them. It is, I conceive, an eſtabliſhment not well ſuited to its martial, though exceedingly well calculated for its parliamentary purpoſes. — Here there is a *treaſury*, as in all the other inferior departments of government. Here the military is ſubordinate to the civil, and the naval confounded with the land ſervice. The object indeed is much the ſame in both. But when the detail is examined, it will be found that they had better be ſeparated. For a reform of this office, I propoſe to reſtore things, to what (all conſiderations taken together) is their natural order; to reſtore them to their juſt proportion, and to their juſt diſtribution. I propoſe, in this military concern, to render the civil ſubordinate to the military; and this will annihilate the greateſt part of the expence, and all the influence belonging to the office. I propoſe to ſend the military branch to the army, and the naval to the Admiralty: and I intend to perfect and accompliſh the whole detail (where it becomes too minute and complicated for legiſlature, and requires exact, official, military, and mechanical knowledge) by a commiſſion of competent officers in both departments. I propoſe to execute by contract, what by contract can be executed, and to bring, as much as poſſible, all eſtimates to be previouſly approved, and finally to be paid by the treaſury.

Thus, by following the courſe of nature, and not the purpoſes of politics, or the accumulated patchwork of occaſional accommodation, this vaſt expenſive department may be methodized; its ſervice proportioned to its neceſſities; and its payments ſubjected to the inſpection of the ſuperior miniſter of finance; who is to judge of it on the

reſult of the total collective exigencies of the ſtate. This laſt is a reigning principle through my whole plan; and it is a principle which I hope may hereafter be applied to other plans.

By theſe regulations taken together—beſides the three ſubordinate treaſuries in the leſſer principalities, five other ſubordinate treaſuries are ſuppreſſed. There is taken away the whole *eſtabliſhment of detail* in the houſehold; the *treaſurer*;—the *comptroller* (for a comptroller is hardly neceſſary where there is no treaſurer) the *cofferer of the houſehold*;—the *treaſurer of the chamber*;—the *maſter of the houſehold*;—the whole *board of green cloth*;—and a vaſt number of ſubordinate offices in the department of the *ſteward of the houſehold*;—the whole eſtabliſhment of the *great wardrobe*;—the *removing wardrobe*;—the *jewel office*;—the *robes*;—the *board of works*; almoſt the whole charge of the *civil branch* of the *board of ordnance*, are taken away. All theſe arrangements together will be found to relieve the nation from a vaſt weight of influence, without diſtreſſing, but rather by forwarding every public ſervice. When ſomething of this kind is done, then the public may begin to breathe. Under other governments, a queſtion of expence is only a queſtion of œconomy, and it is nothing more; with us in every queſtion of expence, there is always a mixture of conſtitutional conſiderations.

It is, Sir, becauſe I wiſh to keep this buſineſs of ſubordinate treaſuries as much as I can together, that I brought the *ordnance-office* before you, though it is properly a military department. For the ſame reaſon I will now trouble you with my thoughts and propoſitions upon two of the greateſt *under treaſuries*, I mean the office of *paymaſter of the land forces* or *treaſurer of the army*; and that of the *treaſurer*

of the navy. The former of theſe has long been a great object of public ſuſpicion and uneaſineſs. Envy too has had its ſhare in the obloquy which is caſt upon this office. But I am ſure that it has no ſhare at all in the reflections I ſhall make upon it, or in the reformations that I ſhall propoſe. I do not grudge to the honourable gentleman who at preſent holds the office, any of the effects of his talents, his merit, or his fortune. He is reſpectable in all theſe particulars. I follow the conſtitution of the office, without perſecuting its holder. It is neceſſary, in all matters of public complaint, where men frequently feel right and argue wrong, to ſeperate prejudice from reaſon; and to be very ſure, in attempting the redreſs of a grievance, that we hit upon its real ſeat, and its true nature. Where there is an abuſe in office, the firſt thing that occurs in heat is to cenſure the officer. Our natural diſpoſition leads all our enquiries rather to perſons than to things. But this prejudice is to be corrected by maturer thinking.

Sir, the profits of the *pay-office* (as an office) are not too great, in my opinion, for its duties, and for the rank of the perſon who has generally held it. He has been generally a perſon of the higheſt rank; that is to ſay, a perſon of eminence and conſideration in this houſe. The great and the invidious profits of the pay-office, are from the *Bank* that is held in it. According to the preſent courſe of the office, and according to the preſent mode of accounting there, this bank muſt neceſſarily exiſt ſomewhere. Money is a productive thing; and when the uſual time of its demand can be tolerably calculated, it may, with prudence, be ſafely laid out to the profit of the holder. It is on this calculation, that the buſineſs of banking proceeds. But no profit can be derived from the uſe of money, which does not make it the intereſt

of

of the holder to delay his account. The proceſs of the exchequer colludes with this intereſt. Is this colluſion from its want of rigour, and ſtrictneſs, and great regularity of form? The reverſe is true. They have in the exchequer brought rigour and formaliſm to their ultimate perfection. The proceſs againſt accountants is ſo rigorous, and in a manner ſo unjuſt, that correctives muſt, from time to time, be applied to it. Theſe correctives being diſcretionary, upon the caſe, and generally remitted by the barons to the lords of the treaſury, as the beſt judges of the reaſons for reſpite, hearings are had; delays are produced; and thus the extreme of rigour in office (as uſual in all human affairs) leads to the extreme of laxity. What with the intereſted ſlowneſs of the officer; the ill-conceived exactneſs of the court; the applications for diſpenſations from that exactneſs, the revival of rigorous proceſs, after the expiration of the time; and the new rigours producing new applications, and new enlargements of time, ſuch delays happen in the public accounts, that they can ſcarcely ever be cloſed.

Beſides, Sir, they have a rule in the exchequer, which, I believe, they have founded upon a very ancient ſtatute, that of the 51ſt of Henry III. by which it is provided, "That when a ſheriff or "bailiff hath began his account, none other "ſhall be received to account, until he that was "firſt appointed hath clearly accounted, and that "the ſum has been received *." Whether this clauſe of that ſtatute be the ground of that abſurd practice, I am not quite able to aſcertain. But it has very generally prevailed, though I am told

* Et quant viſcount ou bailliff ait commence de accompter, nul autre ne ſeit reſceu de acconter tanque le primer qe ſoit aſſis, eit peraccompte, et qe la ſomme ſoit reſceu. Stat. 5. ann. dom. 1266.

that of late they have began to relax from it. In conſequence of forms adverſe to ſubſtantial account, we have a long ſucceſſion of pay-maſters and their repreſentatives, who have never been admitted to account, although perfectly ready to do ſo.

As the extent of our wars has ſcattered the accountants under the pay-maſter into every part of the globe, the grand and ſure pay-maſter, Death, in all his ſhapes, calls theſe accountants to another reckoning. Death, indeed, domineers over every thing, but the forms of the exchequer. Over theſe he has no power. They are impaſſive and immortal. The audit of the exchequer, more ſevere than the audit to which the accountants are gone, demands proofs which in the nature of things are difficult, ſometimes impoſſible to be had. In this reſpect, too, rigour, as uſual, defeats itſelf. Then, the exchequer never gives a particular receipt, or clears a man of his account, as far as it goes. A final acquittance (or a *quietus*, as they term it) is ſcarcely ever to be obtained. Terrors and ghoſts of unlaid accountants, haunt the houſes of their children from generation to generation. Families, in the courſe of ſucceſſion, fall into minorities; the inheritance comes into the hands of females; and very perplexed affairs are often delivered over into the hands of negligent guardians, and faithleſs ſtewards. So that the demand remains, when the advantage of the money is gone, if ever any advantage at all has been made of it. This is a cauſe of infinite diſtreſs to families; and becomes a ſource of influence to an extent, that can ſcarcely be imagined, but by thoſe who have taken ſome pains to trace it. The mildneſs of government in the employment of uſeleſs and dangerous powers, furniſhes no reaſon for their continuance.

As

As things ſtand, can you in juſtice (except perhaps in that over-perfect kind of juſtice which has obtained, by its merits, the title of the oppoſite vice*) inſiſt that any man ſhould, by the courſe of his office, keep a *bank* from whence he is to derive no advantage? That a man ſhould be ſubject to demands below, and be in a manner refuſed an acquittance above; that he ſhould tranſmit an original ſin, and inheritance of vexation to his poſterity, without a power of compenſating himſelf in ſome way or other, for ſo perilous a ſituation? We know, that if the pay-maſter ſhould deny himſelf the advantages of his bank, the public, as things ſtand, is not the richer for it by a ſingle ſhilling. This I thought it neceſſary to ſay, as to the offenſive magnitude of the profits of this office; that we may proceed in reformation on the principles of reaſon, and not on the feelings of envy.

The treaſurer of the navy is, *mutatis mutandis*, in the ſame circumſtances. Indeed all accountants are. Inſtead of the preſent mode, which is troubleſome to the officer, and unprofitable to the public, I propoſe to ſubſtitute ſomething more effectual than rigour, which is the worſt exactor in the world. I mean to remove the very temptations to delay; to facilitate the account; and to transfer this bank, now of private emolument, to the public. The crown will ſuffer no wrong at leaſt from the pay offices; and its terrors will no longer reign over the families of thoſe who hold or have held them. I propoſe, that theſe offices ſhould be no longer *banks* or *treaſuries*, but mere *offices of adminiſtration*.—I propoſe, firſt, that the preſent paymaſter and the treaſurer of the navy, ſhould carry into the exchequer the whole

* Summum jus ſumma injuria.

body of the vouchers for what they have paid over to deputy paymaſters, to regimental agents, or to any of thoſe to whom they have and ought to have paid money. I propoſe that thoſe vouchers ſhall be admitted as actual payments in their accounts; and that the perſons to whom the money has been paid, ſhall then ſtand charged in the exchequer in their place. After this proceſs, they ſhall be debited or charged for nothing but the money-balance that remains in their hands.

I am conſcious, Sir, that if this balance (which they could not expect to be ſo ſuddenly demanded by any uſual proceſs of the exchequer) ſhould now be exacted all at once, not only their ruin, but a ruin of others to an extent which I do not like to think of, but which I can well conceive, and which you may well conceive, might be the conſequence. I told you, Sir, when I promiſed before the holydays to bring in this plan, that I never would ſuffer any man, or deſcription of men, to ſuffer from errors that naturally have grown out of the abuſive conſtitution of thoſe offices which I propoſe to regulate. If I cannot reform with equity, I will not reform at all.

For the regulation of paſt accounts, I ſhall therefore propoſe ſuch a mode, as men, temperate and prudent, make uſe of in the management of their private affairs, when their accounts are various, perplexed, and of long ſtanding. I would therefore, after their example, divide the public debts into three ſorts; good; bad; and doubtful. In looking over the public accounts, I ſhould never dream of the blind mode of the exchequer, which regards things in the abſtract, and knows no difference in the quality of its debts, or the circumſtances of its debtors. By this means, it fatigues itſelf; it vexes others; it often cruſhes

the poor; it lets eſcape the rich; or in a fit of mercy or careleſſneſs, declines all means of recovering its juſt demands. Content with the eternity of its claims, it enjoys its Epicurean divinity with Epicurean languor. But it is proper that all ſorts of accounts ſhould be cloſed ſome time or other—by payment; by compoſition; or by oblivion. *Expedit reipublicæ ut ſit finis litium.* Conſtantly taking along with me, that an extreme rigour is ſure to arm every thing againſt it, and at length to relax into a ſupine neglect, I propoſe, Sir, that even the beſt, ſoundeſt, and the moſt recent debts, ſhould be put into inſtalments, for the mutual benefit of the accountant and the public.

In proportion, however, as I am tender of the paſt, I would be provident of the future. All money that was formerly impreſted to the two great *pay-offices*, I would have impreſted in future to the *bank of England*. Theſe offices ſhould, in future, receive no more than caſh ſufficient for ſmall payments. Their other payments ought to be made by drafts on the Bank, expreſſing the ſervice. A cheque account from both offices, of drafts and receipts, ſhould be annually made up in the exchequer, charging the bank, in account, with the caſh-balance, but not demanding the payment until there is an order from the treaſury, in conſequence of a vote of parliament.

As I did not, Sir, deny to the paymaſter the natural profits of the bank that was in his hands, ſo neither would I to the bank of England. A ſhare of that profit might be derived to the public in various ways. My favourite mode is this; that, in compenſation for the uſe of this money, the bank may take upon themſelves, firſt, *the charge of the mint*; to which they are already, by their charter,

obliged to bring in a great deal of bullion annually to be coined.

In the next place, I mean that they ſhould take upon themſelves the charge of *remittances to our troops abroad.* This is a ſpecies of dealing from which, by the ſame charter, they are not debarred. One and a quarter *per cent.* will be ſaved inſtantly thereby to the public, on very large ſums of money. This will be at once a matter of œconomy, and a conſiderable reduction of influence, by taking away a private contract of an expenſive nature. If the bank, which is a great corporation, and of courſe receives the leaſt profits from the money in their cuſtody, ſhould of itſelf refuſe, or be perſuaded to refuſe, this offer upon thoſe terms, I can ſpeak with ſome confidence, that one at leaſt, if not both parts of the condition would be received, and gratefully received, by ſeveral bankers of eminence. There is no banker who will not be at leaſt as good ſecurity as any paymaſter of the forces, or any treaſurer of the navy, that have ever been bankers to the public: as rich at leaſt as my lord Chatham, or my lord Holland, or either of the honourable gentlemen, who now hold the offices, were, at the time that they entered into them; or as ever the whole eſtabliſhment of the *mint* has been at any period.

Theſe, Sir, are the outlines of the plan I mean to follow, in ſuppreſſing theſe two large ſubordinate treaſuries. I now come to another ſubordinate treaſury; I mean, that of the *paymaſter of the penſions*; for which purpoſe I re-enter the limits of the civil eſtabliſhment—I departed from thoſe limits in purſuit of a principle; and following the ſame game in its doubles, I am brought into thoſe limits again. That treaſury, and that office, I mean to take away; and to transfer the

payment

payment of every name, mode, and denomination of penſions, to the *exchequer*. The preſent courſe of diverſifying the ſame object, can anſwer no good purpoſe; whatever its uſe may be to purpoſes of another kind. There are alſo other liſts of penſions; and I mean that they ſhould all be hereafter paid at one and the ſame place. The whole of that new conſolidated liſt, I mean to reduce to £. 60,000 a year, which ſum I intend it ſhall never exceed. I think that ſum will fully anſwer as a reward to all real merit, and a proviſion for all real public charity that is ever like to be placed upon the liſt. If any merit of an extraordinary nature ſhould emerge, before that reduction is completed, I have left it open for an addreſs of either houſe of parliament to provide for the caſe. To all other demands, it muſt be anſwered, with regret, but with firmneſs, " the " public is poor."

I do not propoſe, as I told you before Chriſtmas, to take away any penſion. I know that the public ſeem to call for a reduction of ſuch of them as ſhall appear unmerited. As a cenſorial act, and puniſhment of an abuſe, might anſwer ſome purpoſe. But this can make no part of *my* plan. I mean to proceed by bill; and I cannot ſtop for ſuch an enquiry. I know ſome gentlemen may blame me. It is with great ſubmiſſion to better judgments, that I recommend it to conſideration; that a critical retroſpective examination of the penſion liſt, upon the principle of merit, can never ſerve for my baſis.—It cannot anſwer, according to my plan, any effectual purpoſe of œconomy, or of future permanent reformation. The proceſs, in any way, will be entangled and difficult; and it will be infinitely ſlow: There is a danger that if we turn our line of march, now directed towards the grand

object,

object, into this more laborious than uſeful detail of operations, we ſhall never arrive at our end.

The king, Sir, has been, by the conſtitution, appointed ſole judge of the merit for which a penſion is to be given. We have a right, undoubtedly, to canvaſs this, as we have to canvaſs every act of government. But there is a material difference between an office to be reformed, and a penſion taken away for demerit. In the former caſe, no charge is implied againſt the holder; in the latter, his character is ſlurred, as well as his lawful emolument affected. The former proceſs is againſt the thing; the ſecond againſt the perſon. The penſioner certainly, if he pleaſes, has a right to ſtand on his own defence; to plead his poſſeſſion; and to bottom his title in the competency of the crown to give him what he holds. Poſſeſſed, and on the defenſive as he is, he will not be obliged to prove his ſpecial merit, in order to juſtify the act of legal diſcretion, now turned into his property, according to his tenure. The very act, he will contend, is a legal preſumption, and an implication of his merit. If this be ſo (from the natural force of all legal preſumption) he would put us to the difficult proof, that he has no merit at all. But other queſtions would ariſe in the courſe of ſuch an enquiry; that is, queſtions of the merit when weighed againſt the proportion of the reward; then the difficulty will be much greater.

The difficulty will not, Sir, I am afraid, be much leſs, if we paſs to the perſon really guilty, in the queſtion of an unmerited penſion; the miniſter himſelf. I admit, that when called to account for the execution of a truſt, he might fairly be obliged to prove the affirmative; and to ſtate the merit for which the penſion is given; though on the penſioner himſelf, ſuch a proceſs would be hard. If in this examination we proceed methodically, and

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ſo as to avoid all ſuſpicion of partiality and prejudice, we muſt take the penſions in order of time, or merely alphabetically. The very firſt penſion to which we come, in either of theſe ways, may appear the moſt groſsly unmerited of any. But the miniſter may very poſſibly ſhew, that he knows nothing of the putting on this penſion — that it was prior in time to his adminiſtration—that the miniſter, who laid it on, is dead; and then we are thrown back upon the penſioner himſelf, and plunged into all our former difficulties. Abuſes, and groſs ones, I doubt not, would appear; and to the correction of which I would readily give my hand; but, when I conſider that penſions have not generally been affected by the revolutions of miniſtry; as I know not where ſuch enquiries would ſtop; and as an abſence of merit is a negative and looſe thing, one might be led to derange the order of families, founded on the probable continuance of their kind of income. I might hurt children; I might injure creditors. I really think it the more prudent courſe, not to follow the letter of the petitions. If we fix this mode of enquiry as a baſis, we ſhall, I fear, end, as parliament has often ended under ſimilar circumſtances. There will be great delay; much confuſion; much inequality in our proceedings. But what preſſes me moſt of all is this; that though we ſhould ſtrike off all the unmerited penſions, while the power of the crown remains unlimited, the very ſame undeſerving perſons might afterwards return to the very ſame liſt: or if they did not, other perſons, meriting as little as they do, might be put upon it to an undefinable amount. This I think is the pinch of the grievance.

For theſe reaſons, Sir, I am obliged to wave this mode of proceeding as any part of my plan. In a plan of reformation, it would be one of my maxims,

maxims, that when I know of an eſtabliſhment which may be ſubſervient to uſeful purpoſes, and which at the ſame time, from its diſcretionary nature, is liable to a very great perverſion from thoſe purpoſes, *I would limit the quantity of the power that might be ſo abuſed.* For I am ſure, that in all ſuch caſes, the rewards of merit will have very narrow bounds; and that partial or corrupt favour will be infinite. This principle is not arbitrary; but the limitation of the ſpecific quantity muſt be ſo in ſome meaſure. I therefore ſtate £. 60,000; leaving it open to the houſe to enlarge or contract the ſum as they ſhall ſee, on examination, that the diſcretion I uſe is ſcanty or liberal. The whole amount of the penſions of all denominations, which have been laid before us, amount, for a period of ſeven years, to conſiderably more than £. 100,000 a year. To what the other liſts amount, I know not. That will be ſeen hereafter. But from thoſe that do appear, a ſaving will accrue to the public, at one time or other, of £. 40,000 a year, and we had better in my opinion to let it fall in naturally, than to tear it crude and unripe from the ſtalk. *

There is a great deal of uneaſineſs among the people, upon an article which I muſt claſs under the head of penſions. I mean the *great patent offices in the exchequer.* They are in reality and ſubſtance no other than penſions, and in no other light ſhall I conſider them. They are ſinecures.

* It was ſuppoſed by the Lord Advocate, in a ſubſequent debate, that Mr. Burke, becauſe he objected to an enquiry into the penſion liſt for the purpoſe of œconomy and relief of the public, would have it withheld from the judgment of parliament for all purpoſes whatſoever. This learned gentleman certainly miſunderſtood him. His plan ſhews, that he wiſhed the whole liſt to be eaſily acceſſible; and he knows that the public eye is of itſelf a great guard againſt abuſe.

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They are always executed by deputy. The duty of the principal is as nothing. They differ however from the penſions on the liſt, in ſome particulars. They are held for life. I think with the public, that the profits of thoſe places are grown enormous; the magnitude of thoſe profits, and the nature of them, both call for reformation. The nature of their profits which grow out of the public diſtreſs, is itſelf invidious and grievous. But I fear that reform cannot be immediate. I find myſelf under a reſtriction. Theſe places, and others of the ſame kind, which are held for life, have been conſidered as property. They have been given as a proviſion for children; they have been the ſubject of family ſettlements; they have been the ſecurity of creditors. What the law reſpects ſhall be ſacred to me. If the barriers of law ſhould be broken down, upon ideas of convenience, even of public convenience, we ſhall have no longer any thing certain among us. If the diſcretion of power is once let looſe upon property, we can be at no loſs to determine whoſe power, and what diſcretion it is that will prevail at laſt. It would be wiſe to attend upon the order of things; and not to attempt to outrun the ſlow, but ſmooth and even courſe of nature. There are occaſions, I admit, of public neceſſity, ſo vaſt, ſo clear, ſo evident, that they ſuperſede all laws. Law being only made for the benefit of the community cannot in any one of its parts, reſiſt a demand which may comprehend the total of the public intereſt. To be ſure, no law can ſet itſelf up againſt the cauſe and reaſon of all law. But ſuch a caſe very rarely happens; and this moſt certainly is not ſuch a caſe. The mere time of the reform is by no means worth the ſacrifice of a principle of law. Individuals paſs like ſhadows; but the commonwealth is fixed and ſtable. The difference therefore of to-day and to-morrow, which to private people

people is immenſe, to the ſtate is nothing. At any rate it is better, if poſſible, to reconcile our œconomy with our laws, than to ſet them at variance; a quarrel which in the end muſt be deſtructive to both.

My idea, therefore, is to reduce thoſe offices to fixed ſalaries, as the preſent lives and reverſions ſhall ſucceſſively fall. I mean, that the office of the great auditor (the auditor of the receipt) ſhall be reduced to £. 3,000 a year; and the auditors of the impreſt and the reſt of the principal officers, to fixed appointments of £. 1,500 a year each. It will not be difficult to calculate the value of this fall of lives to the public, when we ſhall have obtained a juſt account of the preſent income of thoſe places; and we ſhall obtain that account with great facility, if the preſent poſſeſſors are not alarmed with any apprehenſion of danger to their freehold office.

I know too, that it will be demanded of me, how it comes, that ſince I admit theſe offices to be no better than penſions, I choſe, after the principle of law had been ſatisfied, to retain them at all? To this, Sir, I anſwer, that conceiving it to be a fundamental part of the conſtitution of this country, and of the reaſon of ſtate in every country, that there muſt be means of rewarding public ſervice, thoſe means will be incomplete, and indeed wholly inſufficient for that purpoſe, if there ſhould be no further reward for that ſervice, than the daily wages it receives during the pleaſure of the crown.

Whoever ſeriouſly conſiders the excellent argument of Lord Somers, in the banker's caſe, will ſee he bottoms himſelf upon the very ſame maxim which I do; and one of his principal grounds of doctrine for the alienability of the domain in England*

* Before the ſtatute of Queen Anne, which limited the alienation of land.

contrary

contrary to the maxim of the law in France, he lays in the conſtitutional policy, of furniſhing a permanent reward to public ſervice; of making that reward the origin of families; and the foundation of wealth as well as of honours. It is indeed the only genuine unadulterated origin of nobility. It is a great principle in government; a principle at the very foundation of the whole ſtructure. The other judges who held the ſame doctrine, went beyond Lord Somers with regard to the remedy, which they thought was given by law againſt the crown, upon the grant of penſions. Indeed no man knows, when he cuts off the incitements to a virtuous ambition, and the juſt rewards of public ſervice, what infinite miſchief he may do his country, through all generations. Such ſaving to the public may prove the worſt mode of robbing it. The crown, which has in its hands the truſt of the daily pay for national ſervice, ought to have in its hands alſo the means for the repoſe of public labour, and the fixed ſettlement of acknowledged merit. There is a time, when the weather-beaten veſſels of the ſtate, ought to come into harbour. They muſt at length have a retreat from the malice of rivals, from the perfidy of political friends, and the inconſtancy of the people. Many of the perſons, who in all times have filled the great offices of ſtate, have been younger brothers, who had originally little, if any fortune. Theſe offices do not furniſh the means of amaſſing wealth. There ought to be ſome power in the crown of granting penſions out of the reach of its own caprices. An intail of dependence is a bad reward of merit.

I would therefore leave to the crown the poſſibility of conferring ſome favours, which, whilſt they are received as a reward, do not operate as corruption. When men receive obligations from the

the crown through the pious hands of fathers, or of connections as venerable as the paternal, the dependences which ariſe from thence, are the obligations of gratitude, and not the fetters of ſervility. Such ties originate in virtue, and they promote it. They continue men in thoſe habitudes of friendſhip, thoſe political connections, and thoſe political principles in which they began life. They are antidotes againſt a corrupt levity, inſtead of cauſes of it. What an unſeemly ſpectacle would it afford, what a diſgrace would it be to the commonwealth that ſuffered ſuch things, to ſee the hopeful ſon of a meritorious miniſter begging his bread at the door of that treaſury, from whence his father diſpenſed the œconomy of an empire, and promoted the happineſs and glory of his country? Why ſhould he be obliged to proſtrate his honour, and to ſubmit his principles at the levee of ſome proud favourite, ſhouldered and thruſt aſide by every impudent pretender, on the very ſpot where a few days before he ſaw himſelf adored?—obliged to cringe to the author of the calamities of his houſe, and to kiſs the hands that are red with his father's blood?—No, Sir,—Theſe things are unfit—They are intolerable.

Sir, I ſhall be aſked, why I do not chuſe to deſtroy thoſe offices which are penſions, and appoint penſions under the direct title in their ſtead? I allow, that in ſome caſes it leads to abuſe, to have things appointed for one purpoſe, and applied to another. I have no great objection to ſuch a change: but I do not think it quite prudent for me to propoſe it. If I ſhould take away the preſent eſtabliſhment, the burthen of proof reſts upon me, that ſo many penſions, and no more, and to ſuch an amount each, and no more, are neceſſary for the public ſervice. This is what I can never prove; for it

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is a thing incapable of definition. I do not like to take away an object that I think anſwers my purpoſe, in hopes of getting it back again in a better ſhape. People will bear an old eſtabliſhment when its exceſs is corrected, who will revolt at a new one. I do not think theſe office-penſions to be more in number than ſufficient: but on that point the Houſe will exerciſe its diſcretion. As to abuſe, I am convinced, that very few truſts in the ordinary courſe of adminiſtration, have admitted leſs abuſe than this. Efficient miniſters have been their own paymaſters. It is true. But their very partiality has operated as a kind of juſtice; and ſtill it was ſervice that was paid. When we look over this exchequer liſt, we find it filled with the deſcendants of the Walpoles, of the Pelhams, of the Townſhends; names to whom this country owes its liberties, and to whom his majeſty owes his crown. It was in one of theſe lines, that the immenſe and envied employment he now holds, came to a certain duke*, who is now probably ſitting quietly at a very good dinner directly under us; and acting *high life below ſtairs*, whilſt we, his maſters, are filling our mouths with unſubſtantial ſounds, and talking of hungry œconomy over his head. But he is the elder branch of an ancient and decayed houſe, joined to, and repaired by the reward of ſervices done by another. I reſpect the original title, and the firſt purchaſe of merited wealth and honour through all its deſcents, through all its transfers, and all its aſſignments. May ſuch fountains never be dried up. May they ever flow with their original purity, and refreſh and fructify the commonwealth, for ages!

* Duke of Newcaſtle, whoſe dining-room is under the Houſe of Commons.

Sir, I think myſelf bound to give you my reaſons as clearly, and as fully, for ſtopping in the courſe of reformation, as for proceeding in it. My limits are the rules of law; the rules of policy; and the ſervice of the ſtate. This is the reaſon why I am not able to intermeddle with another article, which ſeems to be a ſpecific object in ſeveral of the petitions; I mean the reduction of exorbitant emoluments to efficient offices. If I knew of any real efficient office, which did poſſeſs exorbitant emoluments, I ſhould be extremely deſirous of reducing them. Others may know of them. I do not. I am not poſſeſſed of an exact common meaſure between real ſervice and its reward. I am very ſure, that ſtates do ſometimes receive ſervices, which is hardly in their power to reward according to their worth. If I were to give my judgment, with regard to this country, I do not think the great efficient offices of the ſtate to be overpaid. The ſervice of the public is a thing which cannot be put to auction, and ſtruck down to thoſe who will agree to execute it the cheapeſt. When the proportion between reward and ſervice, is our object, we muſt always conſider of what nature the ſervice is, and what ſort of men they are that muſt perform it. What is juſt payment for one kind of labour, and full encouragement for one kind of talents, is fraud and diſcouragement to others. Many of the great offices have much duty to do, and much expence of repreſentation to maintain. A ſecretary of ſtate, for inſtance, muſt not appear ſordid in the eyes of the miniſters of other nations; neither ought our miniſters abroad to appear contemptible in the courts where they reſide. In all offices of duty, there is, almoſt neceſſarily, a great neglect of all domeſtic affairs. A perſon in high office can rarely take a view of his family-houſe.

If he ſees that the ſtate takes no detriment, the ſtate muſt ſee that his affairs ſhould take as little.

I will even go ſo far as to affirm, that if men were willing to ſerve in ſuch ſituations without ſalary, they ought not to be permitted to do it. Ordinary ſervice muſt be ſecured by the motives to ordinary integrity. I do not heſitate to ſay, that, that ſtate which lays its foundation in rare and heroic virtues, will be ſure to have its ſuperſtructure in the baſeſt profligacy and corruption. An honourable and fair profit is the beſt ſecurity againſt avarice and rapacity; as in all things elſe, a lawful and regulated enjoyment is the beſt ſecurity againſt debauchery and exceſs. For as wealth is power, ſo all power will infallibly draw wealth to itſelf by ſome means or other: and when men are left no way of aſcertaining their profits but by their means of obtaining them, thoſe means will be encreaſed to infinity. This is true in all the parts of adminiſtration, as well as in the whole. If any individual were to decline his appointments, it might give an unfair advantage to oſtentatious ambition over unpretending ſervice; it might breed invidious compariſons; it might tend to deſtroy whatever little unity and agreement may be found among miniſters. And after all, when an ambitious man had run down his competitors by a fallacious ſhew of diſintereſtedneſs, and fixed himſelf in power by that means, what ſecurity is there that he would not change his courſe, and claim as an indemnity ten times more than he has given up?

This rule, like every other, may admit its exceptions. When a great man has ſome one great object in view to be atchieved in a given time, it may be abſolutely neceſſary for him to walk out of all the common-roads, and if his fortune permits it, to hold himſelf out as a ſplendid example. I am told, that ſomething of this kind is

now doing in a country near us. But this is for a ſhort race; the training for a heat or two, and not the proper preparation for the regular ſtages of a methodical journey. I am ſpeaking of eſtabliſhments, and not of men.

It may be expected, Sir, that when I am giving my reaſons why I limit myſelf in the reduction of employments, or of their profits, I ſhould ſay ſomething of thoſe which ſeem of eminent inutility in the ſtate; I mean the number of officers who by their places are attendant on the perſon of the king. Conſidering the commonwealth merely as ſuch, and conſidering thoſe officers only as relative to the direct purpoſes of the ſtate, I admit that they are of no uſe at all. But there are many things in the conſtitution of eſtabliſhments, which appear of little value on the firſt view, which in a ſecondary and oblique manner, produce very material advantages. It was on full conſideration that I determined not to leſſen any of the offices of honour about the crown, in their number or their emoluments. Theſe emoluments, except in one or two caſes, do not much more than anſwer the charge of attendance. Men of condition naturally love to be about a court; and women of condition love it much more. But there is in all regular attendance, ſo much of conſtraint, that if it were a mere charge, without any compenſation, you would ſoon have the court deſerted by all the nobility of the kingdom.

Sir, the moſt ſerious miſchiefs would follow from ſuch a deſertion. Kings are naturally lovers of low company. They are ſo elevated above all the reſt of mankind, that they muſt look upon all their ſubjects as on a level. They are rather apt to hate than to love their nobility, on account of the occaſional reſiſtance to their will, which will be made by their virtue, their petulance, or their pride. It muſt indeed be admitted, that many of the

the nobility are as perfectly willing to act the part of flatterers, tale-bearers, parasites, pimps, and buffoons, as any of the lowest and vilest of mankind can possibly be. But they are not properly qualified for this object of their ambition. The want of a regular education, and early habits, and some lurking remains of their dignity, will never permit them to become a match for an Italian eunuch, a mountebank, a fidler, a player, or any regular practitioner of that tribe. The Roman emperors almost from the beginning, threw themselves into such hands; and the mischief increased every day till its decline, and its final ruin. It is therefore of very great importance (provided the thing is not overdone) to contrive such an establishment as must, almost whether a prince will or not, bring into daily and hourly offices about his person, a great number of his first nobility; and it is rather an useful prejudice that gives them a pride in such a servitude. Though they are not much the better for a court, a court will be much the better for them. I have therefore not attempted to reform any of the offices of honour about the king's person.

There are, indeed, two offices in his stables which are sinecures. By the change of manners, and indeed by the nature of the thing, they must be so; I mean the several keepers of buck-hounds, stag-hounds, fox-hounds, and harriers. They answer no purpose of utility or of splendor. These I propose to abolish. It is not proper that great noblemen should be keepers of dogs, though they were the king's dogs. In every part of my scheme, I have endeavoured that no primary, and that even no secondary service of the state, should suffer by its frugality. I mean to touch no offices but such as I am perfectly sure, are either of no use at all, or not of any use in the least assignable proportion to the burthen with which they load the

revenues of the kingdom, and to the influence with which they oppreſs the freedom of parliamentary deliberation; for which reaſon there are but two offices which are properly ſtate offices, that I have a deſire to reform.

The firſt of them is the new office of *third ſecretary of ſtate*, which is commonly called *ſecretary of ſtate for the colonies*.

We know that all the correſpondence of the colonies had been, until within a few years, carried on by the ſouthern ſecretary of ſtate; and that this department has not been ſhunned upon account of the weight of its duties; but on the contrary, much ſought, on account of its patronage. Indeed he muſt be poorly acquainted with the hiſtory of office, who does not know how very lightly the American functions have always leaned on the ſhoulders of the miniſterial *Atlas*, who has upheld that ſide of the ſphere. Undoubtedly, great temper and judgment was requiſite in the management of the colony politics; but the official detail was a trifle. Since the new appointment, a train of unfortunate accidents has brought before us almoſt the whole correſpondence of this favourite ſecretary's office, ſince the firſt day of its eſtabliſhment. I will ſay nothing of its auſpicious foundation; of the quality of its correſpondence; or of the effects that have enſued from it. I ſpeak merely of its *quantity*; which we know would have been little or no addition to the trouble of whatever office had its hands the fulleſt. But what has been the real condition of the old office of ſecretary of ſtate? Have their velvet bags, and their red boxes, been ſo full, that nothing more could poſſibly be crammed into them?

A correſpondence of a curious nature has been lately publiſhed †. In that correſpondence, Sir,

† Letters between Dr. Addington and Sir James Wright.

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we find, the opinion of a noble perſon, who is thought to be the grand manufacturer of adminiſtrations; and therefore the beſt judge of the quality of his work. He was of opinion, that there was but one man of diligence and induſtry in the whole adminiſtration—it was the late earl of Suffolk. The noble lord lamented very juſtly, that this ſtateſman, of ſo much mental vigour, was almoſt wholly diſabled from the exertion of it, by his bodily infirmities. Lord Suffolk, dead to the ſtate, long before he was dead to nature, at laſt paid his tribute to the common treaſury to which we muſt all be taxed. But ſo little want was found even of his intentional induſtry, that the office, vacant in reality to its duties long before, continued vacant even in nomination and appointment for a year after his death. The whole of the laborious and arduous correſpondence of this empire, reſted ſolely upon the activity and energy of Lord Weymouth.

It is therefore demonſtrable, ſince one diligent man was fully equal to the duties of the two offices, that two diligent men will be equal to the duty of three. The buſineſs of the new office which I ſhall propoſe to you to ſuppreſs, is by no means too much to be returned to either of the ſecretaries which remain. If this duſt in the balance ſhould be thought too heavy, it may be divided between them both; North America (whether free or reduced) to the northern ſecretary, the Weſt Indies to the ſouthern. It is not neceſſary that I ſhould ſay more upon the inutility of this office. It is burning day light. But before I have done, I ſhall juſt remark, that the hiſtory of this office is too recent to ſuffer us to forget, that it was made for the mere convenience of the arrangements of political intrigue, and not for the ſervice of the ſtate; that it was made, in order to give a

colour to an exorbitant increaſe of the civil liſt; and in the ſame act to bring a new acceſſion to the loaded compoſt heap of corrupt influence.

There is, Sir, another office, which was not long ſince, cloſely connected with this of the American ſecretary; but has been lately ſeparated from it for the very ſame purpoſe for which it had been conjoined; I mean the ſole purpoſe of all the ſeparations and all conjunctions that have been lately made — a job.—I ſpeak, Sir, of the *board of trade and plantations.* This board is a ſort of temperate bed of influence; a ſort of gently ripening hot-houſe, where eight members of Parliament receive ſalaries of a thouſand a year, for a certain given time, for doing little, in order to mature at a proper ſeaſon, a claim to two thouſand, to be granted for doing leſs, and on the credit of having toiled ſo long in that inferior laborious department.

I have known that board, off and on, for a great number of years. Both of its pretended objects have been much the objects of my ſtudy, if I have a right to call any purſuits of mine by ſo reſpectable a name. I can aſſure the houſe, and I hope they will not think that I riſk my little credit lightly, that, without meaning to convey the leaſt reflection upon any one of its members paſt or preſent,—it is a board which, if not miſchievous, is of no uſe at all.

You will be convinced, Sir, that I am not miſtaken, if you reflect how generally it is true, that commerce, the principal object of that office, flouriſhes moſt when it is left to itſelf. Intereſt, the great guide of commerce, is not a blind one. It is very well able to find its own way; and its neceſſities are its beſt laws. But if it were poſſible, in the nature of things, that the young ſhould direct the old, and the inexperienced inſtruct the knowing; if a board in

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the ſtate was the beſt tutor for the counting-houſe; if the deſk ought to read lectures to the anvil, and the pen to uſurp the place of the ſhuttle—yet in any matter of regulation, we know that board muſt act with as little authority as ſkill. The prerogative of the crown is utterly inadequate to its object; becauſe all regulations are, in their nature, reſtrictive of ſome liberty. In the reign indeed, of *Charles the firſt*, the council, or committees of council, were never a moment unoccupied, with affairs of trade. But even where they had no ill intention (which was ſometimes the caſe) trade and manufacture ſuffered infinitely from their injudicious tampering. But ſince that period, whenever regulation is wanting (for I do not deny, that ſometimes it may be wanting) parliament conſtantly ſits; and parliament alone is competent to ſuch regulation. We want no inſtruction from boards of trade, or from any other board; and God forbid we ſhould give the leaſt attention to their reports. Parliamentary enquiry is the only mode of obtaining parliamentary information. There is more real knowledge to be obtained, by attending the detail of buſineſs in the committees above ſtairs, than ever did come, or ever will come from any board in this kingdom, or from all of them together. An aſſiduous member of parliament will not be the worſe inſtructed there, for not being paid a thouſand a year for learning his leſſon. And now that I ſpeak of the committees above ſtairs, I muſt ſay, that having till lately attended them a good deal, I have obſerved that no deſcription of members give ſo little attendance, either to communicate, or to obtain inſtruction upon matters of commerce, as the honourable members of the grave board of trade. I really do not recollect,

that

that I have ever ſeen one of them in that ſort of buſineſs. Poſſibly, ſome members may have better memories; and may call to mind ſome job that may have accidentally brought one or other of them, at one time or other, to attend a matter of commerce.

This board, Sir, has had both its original formation, and its regeneration, in a job. In a job it was conceived, and in a job its mother brought it forth. It made one among thoſe ſhewy and ſpecious impoſitions, which one of the experiment-making adminiſtrations of *Charles the ſecond* held out to delude the people, and to be ſubſtituted in the place of the real ſervice which they might expect from a parliament annually ſitting. It was intended alſo to corrupt that body whenever it ſhould be permitted to ſit. It was projected in the year 1668, and it continued in a tottering and rickety childhood for about three or four years, for it died in the year 1673, a babe of as little hopes as ever ſwelled the bills of mortality in the article of convulſed or overlaid children, who have hardly ſtepped over the threſhold of life.

It was buried with little ceremony; and never more thought of, until the reign of *King William*, when in the ſtrange viciſſitude of neglect and vigour, of good and ill ſucceſs that attended his wars, in the year 1695, the trade was diſtreſſed beyond all example of former ſufferings, by the piracies of the French cruiſers. This ſuffering incenſed, and, as it ſhould ſeem, very juſtly incenſed, the houſe of commons. In this ferment they ſtruck, not only at the adminiſtration, but at the very conſtitution of the executive government. They attempted to form in parliament a board for the protection of trade; which, as they planned it, was to draw to itſelf a great part, if

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not the whole, of the functions and powers, both of the admiralty, and of the treaſury; and thus, by a parliamentary delegation of office and officers, they threatened abſolutely to ſeparate theſe departments from the whole ſyſtem of the executive government, and of courſe to veſt the moſt leading and eſſential of its attributes in this board. As the executive government was in a manner convicted of a dereliction of its functions, it was with infinite difficulty, that this blow was warded off in that ſeſſion. There was a threat to renew the ſame attempt in the next. To prevent the effect of this manœuvre, the court oppoſed another manœuvre to it; and in the year 1696, called into life this board of trade, which had ſlept ſince 1673.

This, in a few words, is the hiſtory of the regeneration of the board of trade. It has perfectly anſwered its purpoſes. It was intended to quiet the minds of the people, and to compoſe the ferment that then was ſtrongly working in parliament. The courtiers were too happy to be able to ſubſtitute a board, which they knew would be uſeleſs, in the place of one that they feared would be dangerous. Thus the board of trade was reproduced in a job; and perhaps it is the only inſtance of a public body, which has never degenerated; but to this hour preſerves all the health and vigour of its primitive inſtitution.

This board of trade and plantations has not been of any uſe to the colonies, as colonies; ſo little of uſe, that the flouriſhing ſettlements of New England, of Virginia, and of Maryland, and all our wealthy colonies in the Weſt Indies, were of a date prior to the firſt board of Charles the ſecond. Penſylvania and Carolina were ſettled during its dark quarter, in the interval between the extinction of the firſt, and the formation of the

the ſecond board. Two colonies alone owe their origin to that board. Georgia, which, till lately, has made a very ſlow progreſs; and never did make any progreſs at all, until it had wholly got rid of all the regulations which the board of trade had moulded into its original conſtitution. That colony has coſt the nation very great ſums of money; whereas the colonies which have had the fortune of not being godfathered by the board of trade, never coſt the nation a ſhilling, except what has been ſo properly ſpent in loſing them. But the colony of Georgia, weak as it was, carried with it to the laſt hour, and carries, even in its preſent dead pallid viſage, the perfect reſemblance of its parents. It always had, and it now has, an *eſtabliſhment* paid by the public of England, for the ſake of the influence of the crown; that colony having never been able or willing to take upon itſelf the expence of its proper government, or its own appropriated jobs.

The province of Nova Scotia was the youngeſt and the favourite child of the board. Good God! What ſums the nurſing of that ill-thriven, hard-viſaged, and ill-favoured brat, has coſt to this wittol nation? Sir, this colony has ſtood us in a ſum of not leſs than ſeven hundred thouſand pounds. To this day it has made no repayment —It does not even ſupport thoſe offices of expence, which are miſcalled its government; the whole of that job ſtill lies upon the patient, callous ſhoulders of the people of England.

Sir, I am going to ſtate a fact to you, that will ſerve to ſet in full ſunſhine the real value of formality and official ſuperintendance. There was in the province of Nova Scotia, one little neglected corner; the country of the *neutral French*; which having the good fortune to eſcape the foſtering care both of France and England, and to have

have been ſhut out from the protection and regulation of councils of commerce, and of boards of trade, did, in ſilence, without notice, and without aſſiſtance, increaſe to a conſiderable degree. But it ſeems our nation had more ſkill and ability in deſtroying, than in ſettling a colony. In the laſt war we did, in my opinion, moſt inhumanly, and upon pretences that in the eye of an honeſt man are not worth a farthing, root out this poor innocent deſerving people, whom our utter inability to govern, or to reconcile, gave us no ſort of right to extirpate. Whatever the merits of that extirpation might have been, it was on the footſteps of a neglected people, it was on the fund of unconſtrained poverty, it was on the acquiſitions of unregulated induſtry, that any thing which deſerves the name of a colony in that province, has been formed. It has been formed by overflowings from the exuberant population of New England, and by emigration, from other parts of Nova Scotia of fugitives from the protection of the board of trade.

But if all of theſe things were not more than ſufficient to prove to you the inutility of that expenſive eſtabliſhment, I would deſire you to recollect, Sir, that thoſe who may be very ready to defend it, are very cautious how they employ it; cautious how they employ it even in appearance and pretence. They are afraid they ſhould loſe the benefit of its influence in parliament, if they ſeemed to keep it up for any other purpoſe. If ever there were commercial points of great weight, and moſt cloſely connected with our dependences, they are thoſe which have been agitated and decided in parliament ſince I came into it. Which of the innumerable regulations ſince made had their origin or their improvement in the board of trade? Did any of the ſeveral Eaſt India

bills

bills which have been ſucceſſively produced ſince 1767, originate there? Did any one dream of referring them, or any part of them thither? Was any body ſo ridiculous as even to think of it? If ever there was an occaſion on which the board was fit to be conſulted, it was with regard to the acts, that were preludes to the American war, or attendant on its commencement: thoſe acts were full of commercial regulations, ſuch as they were; —the intercourſe bill; the prohibitory bill; the fiſhery bill? If the board was not concerned in ſuch things, in what particular was it thought fit that it ſhould be concerned? In the courſe of all theſe bills through the houſe, I obſerved the members of that board to be remarkably cautious of intermeddling. They underſtood decorum better; they know that matters of trade and plantations are no buſineſs of theirs.

There were two very recent occaſions, on which, if the idea of any uſe for the board had not been extinguiſhed by preſcription, appeared loudly to call for their interference.

When commiſſioners were ſent to pay his majeſty's and our dutiful reſpects to the congreſs of the United States, a part of their powers under the commiſſion were, it ſeems, of a commercial nature. They were authorized in the moſt ample and undefined manner, to form a commercial treaty with America on the ſpot. This was no trivial object. As the formation of ſuch a treaty would neceſſarily have been no leſs than the breaking up of our whole commercial ſyſtem, and the giving it an entire new form; one would imagine, that the board of trade would have ſat day and night, to model propoſitions, which, on our ſide, might ſerve as a baſis to that treaty. No ſuch thing. Their learned leiſure was not in the leaſt interrupted, though one of the members

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of the board was a commiſſioner, and might, in mere compliment to his office, have been ſuppoſed to make a ſhew of deliberation on the ſubject. But he knew, that his colleagues would have thought he laughed in their faces, had he attempted to bring any thing the moſt diſtantly relating to commerce or colonies before *them*. A noble perſon, engaged in the ſame commiſſion, and ſent to learn his commercial rudiments in New York, (then under the operation of an act for the univerſal prohibition of trade) was ſoon after put at the head of that board. This contempt from the preſent miniſters of all the pretended functions of that board, and their manner of appointing to it the preſiding commiſſioner, that is, the manner of breathing into that board its very ſoul, of inſpiring it with its animating and preſiding principle, puts an end to all diſpute concerning their opinion of the clay it was made of. But I will give them heaped meaſure.

It was but the other day, that the noble lord in the blue ribbon carried up to the houſe of peers, two acts, altering, I think much for the better, but altering, in a great degree, our whole commercial ſyſtem. Theſe acts, I mean, for giving a free trade to Ireland in woollens and in all things elſe, with independent nations, and giving them an equal trade to our own colonies. Here too the novelty of this great, but arduous and critical improvement of ſyſtem, would make you conceive that the anxious ſolicitude of the noble lord in the blue ribbon, would have wholly deſtroyed the plan of ſummer recreation of that board, by references to examine, compare, and digeſt matters for parliament—You would imagine, that Iriſh commiſſioners of cuſtoms and Engliſh commiſſioners of cuſtoms, and commiſſioners of exciſe, that merchants and manufacturers of every denomination, had daily crowded their

their outer rooms. *Nil horum.* The perpetual virtual adjournment, and the unbroken ſitting vacation of that board, was no more diſturbed by the Iriſh than by the plantation commerce, or any other commerce. The ſame matter made a large part of the buſineſs which occupied the houſe for two ſeſſions before; and as our miniſters were not then mellowed by the mild, emollient, and engaging blandiſhments of our dear ſiſter, into all the tenderneſs of unqualified ſurrender, the bounds and limits of a reſtrained benefit naturally required much detailed management and poſitive regulation. But neither the qualified propoſitions which were received, nor thoſe other qualified propoſitions which were rejected by miniſters, were the leaſt concern of the board of trade, or were they ever thought of in the buſineſs.

It is therefore, Sir, on the opinion of parliament, on the opinion of the miniſters, and even on their own opinion of their inutility, that I ſhall propoſe to you to ſuppreſs *the board of trade and plantations*; and to recommit all its buſineſs to the council from whence it was very improvidently taken; and which buſineſs (whatever it might be) was much better done and without any expence; and indeed where in effect it may all come at laſt. Almoſt all that deſerves the name of buſineſs there, is the reference of the plantation acts, to the opinion of gentlemen of the law. But all this may be done, as the Iriſh buſineſs of the ſame nature has always been done, by the council, and with a reference to the attorney and ſolicitor general.

There are ſome regulations in the houſehold, relative to the officers of the yeomen of the guards, and the officers and band of gentlemen penſioners, which I ſhall likewiſe ſubmit to your conſideration,

conſideration, for the purpoſe of regulating eſtabliſhments, which at preſent are much abuſed.

I have now finiſhed all, that for the preſent I ſhall trouble you with, on the *plan of reduction*. I mean next to propoſe to you the *plan of arrangement*, by which I mean to appropriate and fix the civil liſt money to its ſeveral ſervices according to their nature; for I am ſenſible, that if a diſcretion, wholly arbitrary, can be exerciſed over the civil liſt revenue, although the moſt effectual methods may be taken to prevent the inferior departments from exceeding their bounds, the plan of reformation will ſtill be left very imperfect. It will not, in my opinion, be ſafe to permit an entirely arbitrary diſcretion even in the firſt lord of the treaſury himſelf: It will not be ſafe to leave with him a power of diverting the public money from its proper objects, of paying it in an irregular courſe, or of inverting (perhaps) the order of time dictated by the proportion of value, which ought to regulate his application of payment to ſervice.

I am ſenſible too, that the very operation of a plan of œconomy which tends to exonerate the civil liſt of expenſive eſtabliſhments, may in ſome ſort defeat the capital end we have in view, the independence of parliament; and that in removing the public and oſtenſible means of influence, we may increaſe the fund of private corruption. I have thought of ſome methods to prevent an abuſe of ſurplus caſh under diſcretionary application; I mean the heads of *ſecret ſervice*, *ſpecial ſervice*, *various payments*, and the like; which, I hope, will anſwer, and which in due time I ſhall lay before you. Where I am unable to limit the quantity of the ſums to be applied, by reaſon of the uncertain quantity of the ſervice, I endeavour to confine it to its *line*; to ſecure

an indefinite application to the definite ſervice to which it belongs; not, to ſtop the progreſs of expence in its line, but to confine it to that line in which it profeſſes to move.

But that part of my plan, Sir, upon which I principally reſt, that, on which I rely for the purpoſe of binding up, and ſecuring the whole, is to eſtabliſh a fixed and invariable order in all its payments, which it ſhall not be permitted to the firſt lord of the treaſury, upon any pretence whatſoever, to depart from. I therefore divide the civil liſt payments into *nine* claſſes, putting each claſs forward according to the importance or juſtice of the demand, and to the inability of the perſons entitled to enforce their pretenſions; that is, to put thoſe firſt who have the moſt efficient offices, or claim the juſteſt debts; and, at the ſame time, from the character of that deſcription of men, from the retiredneſs, or the remoteneſs of their ſituation, or from their want of weight and power to enforce their pretenſions, or from their being entirely ſubject to the power of a miniſter, without any reciprocal power of aweing him, ought to be the moſt conſidered, and are the moſt likely to be neglected; all theſe I place in the higheſt claſſes: I place in the loweſt thoſe whoſe functions are of the leaſt importance, but whoſe perſons or rank are often of the greateſt power and influence.

In the firſt claſs I place the *judges*, as of the firſt importance. It is the public juſtice that holds the community together; the eaſe, therefore, and independence of the judges, ought to ſuperſede all other conſiderations, and they ought to be the very laſt to feel the neceſſities of the ſtate, or to be obliged either to court or bully a miniſter for their right: They ought to be as *weak ſolicitors on their own demands*, as ſtrenuous aſſertors of

the rights and liberties of others. The judges are, or ought to be, of a *reſerved* and retired character, and wholly unconnected with the political world.

In the ſecond claſs I place the foreign miniſters. The judges are the links of our connections with one another; the foreign miniſters are the links of our connection with other nations. They are not upon the ſpot to demand payment, and are therefore the moſt likely to be, as in fact they have ſometimes been, entirely neglected, to the great diſgrace, and perhaps the great detriment of the nation.

In the third claſs I would bring all the tradeſmen who ſupply the crown by contract, or otherwiſe.

In the fourth claſs I place all the domeſtic ſervants of the king, and all perſons in efficient offices, whoſe ſalaries do not exceed two hundred pounds a year.

In the fifth, upon account of honour, which ought to give place to nothing but charity and rigid juſtice, I would place the penſions and allowances of his majeſty's royal family, comprehending of courſe the queen, together with the ſtated allowance of the privy purſe.

In the ſixth claſs, I place theſe efficient offices of duty, whoſe ſalaries may exceed the ſum of two hundred pounds a year.

In the ſeventh claſs, that mixed maſs, the whole penſion liſt.

In the eighth, the offices of honour about the king.

In the ninth and the laſt of all, the ſalaries and penſions of the firſt lord of the treaſury himſelf, the chancellor of the exchequer, and the other commiſſioners of the treaſury.

If by any poſſible miſmanagement of that part

of the revenue which is left at diſcretion, or by any other mode of prodigality, caſh ſhould be deficient for the payment of the loweſt claſſes, I propoſe, that the amount of thoſe ſalaries where the deficiency may happen to fall, ſhall not be carried as debt to the account of the ſucceeding year, but that it ſhall be entirely lapſed, ſunk, and loſt; ſo that government will be enabled to ſtart in the race of every new year, wholly unloaded, freſh in wind and in vigour. Hereafter, no civil liſt debt can ever come upon the public. And thoſe who do not conſider this as ſaving, becauſe it is not a certain ſum, do not ground their calculations of the future on their experience of the paſt.

I know of no mode of preſerving the effectual execution of any duty, but to make it the direct intereſt of the executive officer that it ſhall be faithfully performed. Aſſuming, then, that the preſent vaſt allowance to the civil liſt is perfectly adequate to all its purpoſes, if there ſhould be any failure, it muſt be from the miſmanagement or neglect of the firſt commiſſioner of the treaſury; ſince, upon the propoſed plan, there can be no expence of any conſequence, which he is not himſelf previouſly to authorize and finally to control. It is therefore juſt, as well as politic, that the loſs ſhould attach upon the delinquency.

If the failure from the delinquency ſhould be very conſiderable, it will fall on the claſs directly above the firſt lord of the treaſury, as well as upon himſelf and his board. It will fall, as it ought to fall, upon offices of no primary importance in the ſtate; but then it will fall upon perſons, whom it will be a matter of no ſlight importance for a miniſter to provoke—it will fall upon perſons of the firſt rank and conſequence in the kingdom; upon thoſe who are neareſt to the king, and frequently

frequently have a more interior credit with him than the miniſter himſelf. It will fall upon maſters of the horſe, upon lord chamberlains, upon lord ſtewards, upon grooms of the ſtole, and lords of the bedchamber. The houſhold troops form an army, who will be ready to mutiny for want of pay, and whoſe mutiny will be *really* dreadful to a commander in chief. A rebellion of the thirteen lords of the bedchamber would be far more terrible to a miniſter, and would probably affect his power more to the quick, than a revolt of thirteen colonies. What an uproar ſuch an event would create at court! What *petitions*, and *committees*, and *aſſociations* would it not produce! Bleſs me! what a clattering of white ſticks and yellow ſticks would be about his head—what a ſtorm of gold keys would fly about the ears of the miniſter—what a ſhower of Georges, and Thiſtles, and medals, and collars of S. S. would aſſail him at his firſt entrance into the antichamber, after an inſolvent Chriſtmas quarter. A tumult which could not be appeaſed by all the harmony of the new-year's ode. Rebellion it is certain there would be; and rebellion may not now indeed be ſo critical an event to thoſe who engage in it, ſince its price is ſo correctly aſcertained;—aſcertained at juſt a thouſand pound.

Sir, this claſſing, in my opinion, is a ſerious and ſolid ſecurity for the performance of a miniſter's duty. Lord Coke ſays, that the ſtaff was put into the treaſurer's hand, to enable him to ſupport himſelf when there was no money in the exchequer, and to beat away importunate ſolicitors. The method, which I propoſe, would hinder him from the neceſſity of ſuch a broken ſtaff to lean on, or ſuch a miſerable weapon for repulſing the demands of worthleſs ſuitors, who, the noble lord in the blue ribbon knows, will

bear many hard blows on the head, and many other indignities, before they are driven from the treaſury. In this plan, he is furniſhed with an anſwer to all their importunity; an anſwer far more concluſive, than if he had knocked them down with his ſtaff—" Sir, (or my Lord), you " are calling for my own ſalary—Sir, you are " calling for the appointments of my colleagues " who ſit about me in office—Sir, you are going " to excite a mutiny at court againſt me—you " are going to eſtrange his majeſty's confidence " from me, through the chamberlain, or the " maſter of the horſe, or the groom of the ſtole."

As things now ſtand, every man, in proportion to his conſequence at court, tends to add to the expences of the civil liſt, by all manner of jobs, if not for himſelf, yet for his dependents. When the new plan is eſtabliſhed, thoſe who are now ſuitors for jobs, will become the moſt ſtrenuous oppoſers of them. They will have a common intereſt with the miniſter in public œconomy. Every claſs, as it ſtands low, will become ſecurity for the payment of the preceding claſs; and thus the perſons, whoſe inſignificant ſervices defraud thoſe that are uſeful, would then become intereſted in their payment. Then the powerful, inſtead of oppreſſing, would be obliged to ſupport the weak; and idleneſs would become concerned in the reward of induſtry. The whole fabric of the civil œconomy would become compact and connected in all its parts; it would be formed into a well organized body, where every member contributes to the ſupport of the whole; and where even the lazy ſtomach ſecures the vigour of the active arm.

This plan, I really flatter myſelf, is laid, not in official formality, nor in airy ſpeculation, but in real life, and in human nature, in what

" comes

" comes home (as Bacon ſays) to the buſineſs " and boſoms of men." You have now, Sir, before you, the whole of my ſcheme, as far as I have digeſted it into a form, that might be in any reſpect worthy of your conſideration.—I intend to lay it before you in five bills*. The plan conſiſts, indeed, of many parts; but they ſtand upon a few plain principles. It is a plan which takes nothing from the civil liſt without diſcharging it of a burthen equal to the ſum carried to the public ſervice. It weakens no one function neceſſary to government; but on the contrary, by appropriating ſupply to ſervice, it gives it greater vigour. It provides the means of order and foreſight to a miniſter of finance, which may always keep all the objects of his office, and their ſtate, condition, and relations, diſtinctly before him. It brings forward accounts without hurrying and diſtreſſing the accountants: whilſt it provides for public convenience, it regards private rights. It extinguiſhes ſecret corruption almoſt to the poſſibility of its exiſtence. It deſtroys direct and viſible influence equal to the offices of at leaſt fifty members of parliament. Laſtly, it prevents the proviſion for his Majeſty's children, from being diverted to the political purpoſes of his miniſter.

These are the points, on which I rely for the merit of the plan: I purſue œconomy in a ſecondary view, and only as it is connected with theſe great objects. I am perſuaded, that even for ſupply, this ſcheme will be far from unfruitful, if it be executed to the extent I propoſe it. I think it will give to the public, at its periods, two or three hundred thouſand pounds a year; if not, it will give them a ſyſtem of œconomy,

* Titles of the Bills read.

which is itſelf a great revenue. It gives me no little pride and ſatisfaction, to find that the principles of my proceedings are, in many reſpects, the very ſame with thoſe which are now purſued in the plans of the French miniſter of finance. I am ſure, that I lay before you a ſcheme eaſy and practicable in all its parts. I know it is common at once to applaud and to reject all attempts of this nature. I know it is common for men to ſay, that ſuch and ſuch things are perfectly right—very deſirable; but that, unfortunately, they are not practicable. Oh! no, Sir, no. Thoſe things which are not practicable, are not deſirable. There is nothing in the world really beneficial, that does not lie within the reach of an informed underſtanding, and a well directed purſuit. There is nothing that God has judged good for us, that he has not given us the means to accompliſh, both in the natural and the moral world. If we cry, like children for the moon, like children we muſt cry on.

We muſt follow the nature of our affairs, and conform ourſelves to our ſituation. If we do, our objects are plain and compaſſable. Why ſhould we reſolve to do nothing, becauſe what I propoſe to you may not be the exact demand of the petition; when we are far from reſolved to comply even with what evidently is ſo? Does this ſort of chicanery become us? The people are the maſters. They have only to expreſs their wants at large and in groſs. We are the expert artiſts; we are the ſkilful workmen, to ſhape their deſires into perfect form, and to fit the utenſil to the uſe. They are the ſufferers, they tell the ſymptoms of the complaint; but we know the exact ſeat of the diſeaſe, and how to apply the remedy, according to the rules of art. How ſhocking would it be to ſee us pervert our ſkill, into a

ſiniſter and ſervile dexterity, for the purpoſe of evading our duty, and defrauding our employers, who are our natural lords, of the object of their juſt expectations. I think the whole not only practicable, but practicable in a very ſhort time. If we are in earneſt about it, and if we exert that induſtry, and thoſe talents in forwarding the work, which I am afraid may be exerted in impeding it—I engage, that the whole may be put in complete execution within a year. For my own part, I have very little to recommend me for this or for any taſk, but a kind of earneſt and anxious perſeverance of mind, which, with all its good and all its evil effects, is moulded into my conſtitution. I faithfully engage to the houſe, if they chooſe to appoint me to any part in the execution of this work, which (when they have made it theirs by the improvements of their wiſdom, will be worthy of the able aſſiſtance they may give me) that by night and by day, in town, or in country, at the deſk, or in the foreſt, I will, without regard to convenience, eaſe, or pleaſure, devote myſelf to their ſervice, not expecting or admitting any reward whatſoever. I owe to this country my labour, which is my all; and I owe to it ten times more induſtry, if ten times more I could exert. After all I ſhall be an unprofitable ſervant.

At the ſame time, if I am able, and if I ſhall be permitted, I will lend an humble helping hand to any other good work which is going on. I have not, Sir, the frantic preſumption to ſuppoſe, that this plan contains in it the whole of what the public has a right to expect, in the great work of reformation they call for. Indeed, it falls infinitely ſhort of it. It falls ſhort, even of my own ideas. I have ſome thoughts not yet fully

fully ripened, relative to a reform in the cuſtoms and exciſe, as well as in ſome other branches of financial adminiſtration. There are other things too, which form eſſential parts in a great plan for the purpoſe of reſtoring the independence of parliament. The contractors bill of laſt year it is fit to revive; and I rejoice that it is in better hands than mine. The bill for ſuſpending the votes of cuſtomhouſe officers, brought into parliament ſeveral years ago, by one of our worthieſt and wiſeſt members, * (would to God we could along with the plan revive the perſon who propoſed it.) But a man of very real integrity, honour, and ability will be found to take his place, and to carry his idea into full execution. You all ſee how neceſſary it is to review our military expences for ſome years paſt, and, if poſſible, to bind up and cloſe that bleeding artery of profuſion: but that buſineſs alſo, I have reaſon to hope, will be undertaken by abilities that are fully adequate to it. Something muſt be deviſed (if poſſible) to check the ruinous expence of elections.

Sir, all or moſt of theſe things muſt be done. Every one muſt take his part.

If we ſhould be able by dexterity or power, or intrigue, to diſappoint the expectations of our conſtituents, what will it avail us? we ſhall never be ſtrong or artful enough to parry, or to put by the irreſiſtible demands of our ſituation. That ſituation calls upon us, and upon our conſtituents too, with a voice which *will* be heard. I am ſure no man is more zealouſly attached than I am to the privileges of this houſe, particularly in regard to the excluſive management of money. The lords have no right to the diſpoſition, in any ſenſe, of the public purſe; but they have

* W. Dowdeſwell, Eſq; chancellor of the exchequer, 1765.

gone

gone further in † ſelf-denial than our utmoſt jealouſy could have required. A power of examining accounts, to cenſure, correct, and puniſh, we never, that I know of, have thought of denying to the Houſe of Lords. It is ſomething more than a century ſince we voted that body uſeleſs: they have now voted themſelves ſo. The whole hope of reformation is at length caſt upon *us*; and let us not deceive the nation, which does us the honour to hope every thing from our virtue. If *all* the nation are not equally forward to preſs this duty upon us, yet be aſſured, that they all equally expect we ſhould perform it. The reſpectful ſilence of thoſe who wait upon your pleaſure, ought to be as powerful with you, as the call of thoſe who require your ſervice as their right. Some, without doors, affect to feel hurt for your dignity, becauſe they ſuppoſe, that menaces are held out to you. Juſtify their good opinion, by ſhewing that no menaces are neceſſary to ſtimulate you to your duty. — But, Sir, whilſt we may ſympathize with them, in one point, who ſympathize with us in another, we ought to attend no leſs to thoſe who approach us like men, and who, in the guiſe of petitioners, ſpeak to us in the tone of a concealed authority. It is not wiſe to force them to ſpeak out more plainly, what they plainly mean. —But, the petitioners are violent. Be it ſo. Thoſe who are leaſt anxious about your conduct, are not thoſe that love you moſt. Moderate affection and ſatiated enjoyment, are cold and reſpectful; but an ardent and injured paſſion, is tempered up with wrath, and grief, and ſhame, and conſcious worth, and the maddening

† In the Debate on the Rejection of Lord Shelburne's motion in the Houſe of Lords.

ſenſe

ſenſe of violated right. A jealous love lights his torch from the firebrands of the furies.—They who call upon you to belong *wholly* to the people, are thoſe who wiſh you to return to your *proper* home; to the ſphere of your duty, to the poſt of your honour, to the manſion-houſe of all genuine, ſerene, and ſolid ſatisfaction. We have furniſhed to the people of England (indeed we have) ſome real cauſe of jealouſy. Let us leave that ſort of company which, if it does not deſtroy our innocence, pollutes our honour: let us free ourſelves at once from every thing that can increaſe their ſuſpicions, and inflame their juſt reſentment: let us caſt away from us, with a generous ſcorn, all the love-tokens and ſymbols that we have been vain and light enough to accept;—all the bracelets and ſnuff-boxes, and miniature pictures, and hair-devices, and all the other adulterous trinkets that are the pledges of our alienation, and the monuments of our ſhame. Let us return to our legitimate home, and all jars and all quarrels will be loſt in embraces. Let the commons in parliament aſſembled, be one and the ſame thing with the commons at large. The diſtinctions that are made to ſeparate us, are unnatural and wicked contrivances. Let us identify, let us incorporate ourſelves with the people. Let us cut all the cables and ſnap the chains which tie us to an unfaithful ſhore, and enter the friendly harbour, that ſhoots far out into the main its moles and jettees to receive us. —— "War with the world, and peace with our conſtituents." Be this our motto and our principle. Then indeed, we ſhall be truly great. Reſpecting ourſelves, we ſhall be reſpected by the world. At preſent all is troubled and cloudy, and diſtracted, and full of anger and turbulence, both abroad and at home:

but

but the air may be cleared by this ſtorm, and light and fertility may follow it. Let us give a faithful pledge to the people, that we honour, indeed, the crown; but that we *belong* to them; that we are their auxiliaries, and not their taſk-maſters; the fellow-labourers in the ſame vine-yard, not lording over their rights, but helpers of their joy: that to tax them is a grievance to ourſelves, but to cut off from our enjoyments to forward theirs, is the higheſt gratification we are capable of receiving. I feel with comfort, that we are all warmed with theſe ſentiments, and while we are thus warm, I wiſh we may go directly and with a chearful heart to this ſalutary work.

Sir, I move for leave to bring in a Bill, "*For "the better regulation of his Majeſty's civil "eſtabliſhments, and of certain public of-"fices; for the limitation of penſions, and "the ſuppreſſion of ſundry uſeleſs, expenſive, "and inconvenient places; and for applying "the monies ſaved thereby to the public "ſervice.*"

Mr. Fox ſeconded the motion.

Lord North ſtated, that there was a difference between this bill for regulating the eſtabliſhments, and ſome of the others, as they affected the antient patrimony of the crown; and therefore wiſhed them to be poſtponed, till the King's conſent could be obtained. This diſtinction was ſtrongly controverted; but when it was inſiſted on as a point of decorum *only*, it was agreed to poſtpone them to another day. Accordingly, on the Monday following, viz. Feb. 14, leave was given, on the motion

motion of Mr. Burke, without oppoſition, to bring in

1ſt, " *A bill for the ſale of the foreſt and other* " *crown lands, rents, and hereditaments, with cer-* " *tain exceptions*; and for applying the produce " thereof to the public ſervice; *and for ſecuring,* " *aſcertaining, and ſatisfying*, tenant-rights, *and* " *common and other rights.*"

2d, " *A bill for the more perfectly uniting to the* " *crown the principality of Wales, and the county* " *palatine of Cheſter, and for the more commodious* " *adminiſtration of juſtice within the ſame*; *as alſo,* " *for aboliſhing certain offices now appertaining* " *thereto*; for quieting dormant claims, aſcer- " taining and ſecuring tenant-rights; *and for the* " *ſale of all foreſt lands, and other lands, tenements,* " *and hereditaments, held by his Majeſty in right of* " *the ſaid principality, or county palatine of Cheſter,* " and for applying the produce thereof to the " public ſervice."

3d, " *A bill for uniting to the crown the duchy* " *and county palatine of Lancaſter*; *for the ſuppreſ-* " *ſion of unneceſſary offices now belonging thereto*; *for* " *the* aſcertainment and ſecurity of tenant and " other rights; *and for the ſale of all rents, lands,* " *tenements, and hereditaments, and foreſts, within* " *the ſaid dutchy and county palatine, or either of* " *them*; and for applying the produce thereof to " the public ſervice."——*And it was ordered that* Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, Lord John Cavendiſh, Sir George Savile, Colonel Barrè, Mr. Thomas Townſhend, Mr. Byng, Mr. Dunning, Sir Joſeph Mawbey, Mr. Recorder of London, Sir Robert Clayton, Mr. Frederick Montagu, the Earl of Upper Oſſory, Sir William Guiſe, and Mr. Gilbert, *do prepare and bring in the ſame.*

At the ſame time, Mr. Burke moved for leave to bring in—4th, " *A bill for uniting the dutchy*

" *of*

" *of Cornwall to the crown*; *for the ſuppreſſion of* " *certain unneceſſary offices now belonging thereto,* " *for the* aſcertainment and ſecurity of tenant and " other rights; *and for the ſale of certain rents,* " *lands, and tenements, within or belonging to the* " *ſaid dutchy*; and for applying the produce " thereof to the public ſervice."

But ſome objections being made by the ſurveyor general of the dutchy concerning the rights of the Prince of Wales, now in his minority, and Lord North remaining perfectly ſilent, Mr. Burke, at length, though he ſtrongly contended againſt the principle of the objection, conſented to withdraw this laſt motion for the *preſent*, to be renewed upon an early occaſion.

THE END.

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